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# The Development of Public School Adult Academic Education in Louisiana.

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ADULT ACADEMIC EDUCATION IN LOUISIANA.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT ACADEMIC  
EDUCATION IN LOUISIANA

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
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Doctor of Education

in

The Department of Education

by  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	ii
LIST OF TABLES. . . . .	vii
LIST OF FIGURES . . . . .	viii
ABSTRACT. . . . .	x
 CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION. . . . .	1
Preliminary statement . . . . .	1
Purpose of the study. . . . .	4
Delimitations . . . . .	4
Importance of the study . . . . .	5
Definition of terms . . . . .	6
Procedure used. . . . .	8
Organization of study . . . . .	9
II. HIGHLIGHTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL	
ADULT ACADEMIC EDUCATION IN LOUISIANA . . . . .	10
Influence of early Adult Academic Education	
Programs at the national level. . . . .	10
State aid . . . . .	14
Early records . . . . .	15
Changes in scope. . . . .	16
Origins of public school Adult Academic Education	
in Louisiana. . . . .	18

CHAPTER	PAGE
Early local and state public school adult academic education programs . . . . .	19
Federal Emergency Relief Education Program. . . . .	22
The public school adult academic education program after World War II. . . . .	28
III. NEEDS AND PURPOSES OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT	
ACADEMIC EDUCATION PROGRAM IN LOUISIANA . . . . .	32
Literacy problem. . . . .	33
Educational upgrading and employment. . . . .	36
School attendance problem . . . . .	38
Social and civic responsibilities . . . . .	50
IV. THE LOUISIANA PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT ACADEMIC	
EDUCATION PROGRAM IN OPERATION, 1920-1949 . . . . .	53
Early public school adult academic education programs, 1920-1933 . . . . .	53
Organization and administration of the first Statewide literacy campaign . . . . .	54
Curriculum and teaching procedure . . . . .	55
Finances. . . . .	56
A final drive . . . . .	57
Federal Emergency Relief education, 1934-1943 . . . . .	58
Organization and administration . . . . .	59
Curriculum, teachers and classes. . . . .	61
Discord over the Federal Emergency Relief Education Program . . . . .	64

CHAPTER	PAGE
Revision of the Federal Emergency Relief	
Education Program . . . . .	65
Renewed drive against illiteracy. . . . .	69
End of an era . . . . .	72
V. THE MODERN PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT ACADEMIC EDUCATION	
PROGRAM IN OPERATION, 1950-1963 . . . . .	74
Organization and administration of	
Veterans Education. . . . .	74
Reimbursement plan. . . . .	75
Class organization and teaching personnel . . . .	76
Organization and operation of the new state	
public school adult academic education program. .	77
Local class promotion and organization. . . . .	79
Testing and student placement . . . . .	81
Materials and methods of instruction. . . . .	83
Issuance of certificates. . . . .	90
Teacher qualification and rate of pay . . . . .	92
Allocation of state funds and rate of	
reimbursement . . . . .	94
Progress of the modern public school adult	
academic education program. . . . .	95

CHAPTER	PAGE
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION. . . . .	103
Summary . . . . .	103
Conclusion. . . . .	105
BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .	107
APPENDIX. . . . .	116
VITA. . . . .	159



## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. A Comparison of the Per Cent of Population Twenty-five years of Age and Over that was Functionally Illiterate in Each of Certain Southern States in 1940, 1950, and 1960. . . . .	7
II. Census of Educables, January 1, 1946, Compared With Total School Registration, End of 1945-46 Session by Parishes. . . . .	46

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
1.	Percentage of Functional Illiteracy Among the Adults 25 Years of Age and Over, by Parishes, 1940 . . . . .	39
2.	Percentage of Functional Illiteracy Among the Adults 25 Years of Age and Over, by Parishes, 1950 . . . . .	40
3.	Percentage of Functional Illiteracy Among the Adults 25 Years of Age and Over, by Parishes, 1960 . . . . .	41
4.	Percentage of Adults 25 Years of Age and Over with Less than a High School Education, by Parishes, 1940 . . . . .	42
5.	Percentage of Adults 25 Years of Age and Over with Less than a High School Education, by Parishes, 1950 . . . . .	43
6.	Percentage of Adults 25 Years of Age and Over with Less than a High School Education, by Parishes, 1960 . . . . .	44
7.	Percentage of Enrollment Remaining in School Each Year from Grades One to Ten Compared to the Original First Grade Registration for the Group. . . . .	49

FIGURE	PAGE
8. Total Enrollment of Adult Students in All Classes, by Parishes, 1961-62 . . . . .	98
9. Cumulative Number of Graduates from Adult Academic High School Programs, by Parishes, 1954 to 1963 . . . . .	99

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide a valid account of the development of Public School Adult Academic Education in Louisiana. The historical procedure was utilized in examining the origin, growth, and contributions of the movement.

Louisiana entered the second decade of the twentieth century with a legacy of low educational attainment among many of its adult citizens. The immediate past had been difficult for the vast majority of people, both white and Negro, and formal education had little to offer in meeting the practical problems of the period.

Leading educators of Louisiana throughout the years were aware of the seriousness of the illiteracy problem among adults. Campaigns were launched in an effort to improve the educational status of Louisiana. However, the depression of the 1930's and World War II interrupted the programs and shifted the main interest of Louisiana citizens to meeting the emergency at hand.

The failure of some parents to enroll their children in any school for several years and the high drop-out rate among others who had enrolled further complicated the total educational problem in the state.

Following World War II the Louisiana legislature provided funds for the establishment of public school adult academic classes on the elementary and secondary levels. Leaders in adult education maintained that the appropriations for the program were insufficient to

meet the needs of many adult students. Critics of the program pointed out that only a small fraction of the adults in need of further education had participated in the program.

During the period from 1940 to 1960 Louisiana reduced its per cent of illiteracy among adults, twenty-five years of age and over, from 35.7 to 21.3. The median educational level for the same age group was raised from 6.6 in 1940 to 8.8 in 1960. However, the educational attainment level was still low. As of 1960, Louisiana had 348,795 functional illiterates among its adults, twenty-five years of age and over, and 67.6 per cent of this age group had not completed high school.

Conclusions reached as a result of this study include the following:

1. A serious problem of low educational attainment among many adult citizens in Louisiana has existed for several decades.
2. Public school officials have made strenuous efforts for years to alert the people and the political leaders of Louisiana to the importance of taking action to mitigate the problem.
3. Efforts have been made to upgrade the educational level of Louisiana adults and some progress has resulted. However, these programs were intermittent, limited in scope, and inadequately financed.

4. Many adults with limited educational attainment have failed to participate in Public School Adult Academic Education in Louisiana.
5. There is reason to question the qualification of many teachers engaged in adult education and to re-examine the schedule for adult classes, the supervision policies, the instructional materials used, and the methods involved in teaching.
6. A general public apathy prevails regarding the low adult educational level in Louisiana. Many political, civic, business and industrial leaders have not contributed their full energies and influence to the support of Public School Adult Academic Education in the state.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Louisiana has been plagued for many years with a high rate of educational deficiencies among its general adult population. Thousands of its citizens both white and Negro have never attended school, and many others received such limited schooling that for all practical purposes they are functionally illiterate. On various occasions both political and educational leaders of this state have expressed a deep concern regarding this problem. However, the limited efforts made over the years to provide an adequate adult education program for dealing with this problem have not been equal to the challenge. The 1960 United States Census revealed that the problem of low educational standards among many adults was still confronting Louisiana.

The principal objective of this study was to examine the background of events surrounding the establishment of early public school adult academic educational programs for dealing with the problem, and to trace their growth, development and contributions through the present period.

#### I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

The Public School Adult Academic Education Program in Louisiana today represents the collective aspirations and efforts of many people

over the years, both in the field of education and in government.

In 1919, State Superintendent T. H. Harris, deeply concerned about Louisiana's high percentage of adult illiteracy, wrote the parish superintendents alerting them to the seriousness of the problem and expressing hope that the various school boards would establish special classes for adults.<sup>1</sup>

The framers of the Louisiana State Constitution of 1921 made tentative provisions for the establishment of public school adult education classes. However, the legislative action essential for the implementation of these plans was not forthcoming for several years.<sup>2</sup>

The administration of Governor Huey P. Long was active in supporting a campaign to eliminate adult illiteracy in Louisiana. A special session of the Legislature passed a tax law and dedicated the receipts therefrom for use in the program to combat adult education deficiencies.<sup>3</sup>

The Rosewald Fund donated \$50,000 in the fall of 1929 to assist in underwriting the campaign against adult illiteracy in Louisiana.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>T. H. Harris, "Illiteracy Doomed," Southern School Work, VII (February, 1919), 298-299.

<sup>2</sup>M. S. Robertson, Adult Education in Louisiana (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1939), pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Eighty-First Annual Report for the Session 1929-30, Bulletin No. 186 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1930), pp. 14-15.



During the depression years of the 1930's, public education of all forms in Louisiana was drastically affected by insufficient funds. Property-assessment taxes formed the basis for the major part of school revenue, and with economic conditions making it virtually impossible for many property owners to meet their tax obligations, public school finances shrank to a dangerously low point.

In 1934, The Federal Emergency Relief Administration, in agreement with the State Department of Education, sponsored a program of instruction which included provisions for adult academic education.<sup>5</sup> With the outbreak of World War II, these federally sponsored emergency educational programs in Louisiana were discontinued. This marked the beginning of a new period of inactivity with regard to public school adult education in Louisiana.

Following World War II, the "G. I. Bill" made it possible for many veterans in Louisiana to receive elementary and secondary instruction through the combined efforts of local, state, and federal school officials.<sup>6</sup>

The present program of public school adult academic education was helped substantially when the Louisiana Legislature, in 1950, agreed to underwrite the establishment of special adult classes. In

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<sup>5</sup>Eighty-Sixth Annual Report for the Session 1934-35, Bulletin No. 309 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1935), p. 22.

<sup>6</sup>One-Hundredth Annual Report for the Session 1948-49, Bulletin No. 699 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1950), pp. 66-67.

that year, State Superintendent Shelby M. Jackson submitted a request to the Legislature for authorization of the program. Through Act 252, the Legislature approved the creation of the adult program and authorized the appropriation of \$25,000 per year for two years to help finance it. In 1953, the annual appropriation was increased to \$100,000. This was increased to \$250,000 in 1957, and to \$350,000 in 1960. In 1962 the appropriation was reduced to \$250,000.<sup>7</sup>

## II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to provide an account of the development of public school adult academic education in Louisiana. More specifically, the study dealt with the historical background, needs and purposes, administration and operation, and progress made in the program of public school adult academic education in this state.

## III. DELIMITATIONS

This study is limited to an investigation of the Public School Adult Academic Education Program as administered by publicly elected or appointed school officials and supported by public funds. Adults enrolled in vocational and technical classes are excluded from this account.

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<sup>7</sup>Appropriation figures were obtained from the State Department of Education, Division of Adult Education.

The years 1920 to 1963 represent the main period of time covered by this study.

#### IV. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The problem of limited educational attainment in a large segment of the adult population of Louisiana has been of deep concern to educational leaders of this state for several decades.

The United States Census of 1920 indicated that Louisiana had the largest percentage of adult illiteracy in the nation — 21.9 per cent of persons ten years of age and over who were unable to read or write.<sup>8</sup>

In 1940, 12.8 per cent of this state's adult population had no schooling whatsoever, the highest in all forty-eight states. In the same year, only 17.5 per cent of the adults had graduated from high school.

According to the Bureau of Census Reports in 1960, Louisiana still occupied the position as the state with the highest percentage of adults, twenty-five years of age and over, who were classified as functional illiterates. Also, Louisiana's position among the Southern States from 1940 to 1960 in the per cent of adult illiterates was not

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<sup>8</sup> United States Bureau of Census. Current Population Report: Illiteracy of the Population in the States, By States, 1900 to 1930 and Estimates for 1950, and 1960, Series P. 23, No. 8 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1961), pp. 1-2.

too favorable.<sup>9</sup> Table I gives a comparison of the per cent of the population, twenty-five years of age and older, that was functionally illiterate in each of certain Southern States according to the Census Report for the years 1940, 1950, and 1960, respectively.

In view of the limited educational attainment levels of a large number of adults in Louisiana, and the increased recognition today that the type and extent of education a person receives has an important bearing on his economic status, as well as his citizenship capabilities, it is felt that a study of this problem is both relevant and significant. The information and understanding gained from this study may be useful in planning future programs for combating adult illiteracy, decreasing unemployment, and helping adult citizens gain that degree of self-confidence and social responsibility essential for effective membership in a democratic society.

#### V. DEFINITION OF TERMS

This study is confined to the academic educational opportunities provided for adult students at the elementary and secondary levels by the sixty-seven public school systems in Louisiana.

"Adult student" as used herein refers to any person who was 19 years of age or older enrolled in adult academic educational classes.

The term "adult academic education" as used in this study

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

TABLE I

A COMPARISON OF THE PER CENT OF POPULATION  
 TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE AND OVER THAT  
 WAS FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE IN EACH  
 OF CERTAIN SOUTHERN STATES IN  
 1940, 1950, AND 1960

States	1940	1950	1960
	Percentages		
Alabama	28.9	22.6	16.3
Arkansas	23.1	19.8	15.4
Florida	18.5	13.8	9.2
Georgia	30.1	24.2	17.6
Louisiana	35.7	28.7	21.3
Mississippi	30.2	25.2	18.8
North Carolina	26.2	21.1	16.5
South Carolina	34.7	27.4	20.3

refers to those public school educational programs specifically organized to offer a functional curriculum for persons nineteen years of age and over who are not enrolled in regular elementary, secondary, or higher educational classes. It embraces only those instructional activities which are principally concerned with development of the skills, knowledge, abilities, and judgments basic to elementary and secondary levels of education.

The term "educable" as used herein refers to any child between the ages of six and eighteen, inclusive as enumerated in the school census of Louisiana.

An "illiterate" as used prior to the U. S. Census of 1940, refers to a person ten years of age and over who is unable to read and write in any language.

A "functionally illiterate adult" is defined as one who has completed less than five years of school and is unable to read and write intelligibly.

## VI. PROCEDURE USED

The historical method of research is used in this study. Special attention is directed to the collection of data, with consideration of primary and secondary sources of information, bibliographical procedure, and the organization and interpretation of materials. All data used in the study have been subjected to internal and external criticism.

## VII. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

An introduction to the nature and purpose of the problem is presented in Chapter I. A survey is provided in Chapter II regarding the background of events on the national and state levels which led to the origin, growth, and development of public school adult academic education in Louisiana. The specific needs and purposes of the program are indicated in Chapter III. The organization and operation of the public school adult education program from 1920 to 1949 is investigated in Chapter IV. This includes the problems of administration, supervision, curriculum, finances, relief teachers, and discord with the federal government. The activities related to the organization and operation of the program from 1950 to 1963 are treated in Chapter V. A summary and the conclusions of the study are presented in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER II

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT ACADEMIC  
EDUCATION IN LOUISIANA

Much time and effort have been expended both on the national and state levels in an attempt to formulate and direct a systematic program of adult education. The historical origins and developmental trends of these movements have influenced the establishment of the modern program of adult education in Louisiana.

I. INFLUENCE OF EARLY ADULT ACADEMIC EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Various forms of organized adult education have existed in this country since the early years of its history. During the first half of the 19th century there was a great development of institutions which provided new opportunities for adult learning. Outstanding among these were the lyceums, local associations of men and women with a degree of formal education who were concerned with their own further learning and the creation of a public school system. In addition to the lyceums there was the development of libraries, museums, workers' institutes, lecture series, endowed institutions, publicly and privately supported evening schools, and numerous other institutions that offered additional educational opportunities for



adults.<sup>1</sup>

During the decades following the Civil War another era of growth in organized adult education ensued. Intermittent university lecture series for the general public developed into systematic programs of university extension services for adults. The Chautauqua institution grew strong and exerted wide influence on such activities as reading circles, summer schools and encampments, and correspondence instruction for adults.<sup>2</sup>

With the establishment by the federal government of the Extension Service in the Department of Agriculture in 1914, a highly organized and pervasive instrument was marshalled behind the cause for adult education.

World War I helped the United States to become aware of the many illiterates and unassimilated foreigners in its population. Instructional programs established to aid these groups were greatly expanded. This action helped create a corps of teachers which later provided a strong nucleus for the development of a more extensive adult educational program.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1930's and 1940's two major national programs projected adult education to the attention of the general American public and

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph R. Hart, Adult Education (New York: Crowell Company, 1927), pp. 169-170.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 175-176.

<sup>3</sup>C. Hartley Grattan, In Quest of Knowledge (New York: Association Press, 1955), pp. 225-226.

provided the initial experience for many who would later become the leaders of the public school adult education movement. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the subsequent Works Progress Administration of the depression era employed professional and other skilled workers as teachers for adult classes.

With the United States' entry into World War II, the armed services provided a broad program of off-duty education for the troops through formal classes, discussion groups, and correspondence instruction.<sup>4</sup>

Adult education had become a major mass movement by the end of the War. The same expansion was experienced at the adult level as had occurred during the 19th century in public elementary education and in public secondary education during the first quarter of the 20th century.

Although the impetus to adult education resulted primarily from the work of private groups and efforts by the federal government to cope with emergency conditions, the public schools of the nation also were assuming partial responsibility for adult education. In the latter part of the 19th century public evening schools were attracting older youth and adults in greater numbers. These schools increasingly took on the character of adult educational institutions. The use of public schools for mature students resulted in some

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<sup>4</sup>Mary L. Ely, Handbook of Adult Education in the United States (New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1948), pp. 132-133.

opposition from the community. However, Knowles points out that most superintendents who advocated such use of the schools eventually gained satisfactory support.<sup>5</sup>

By the first quarter of the present century the use of the public evening school for adult education had become a permanent part of the American educational system. Cleveland had 11,383 adult students in 1915, Chicago 27,987 in 1913, and Los Angeles 22,080 by 1920. This pattern of growth in public school adult education was repeated in many of the large cities of the country.<sup>6</sup>

The basic subjects of the primary grades constituted the curriculum of the early evening schools. With the influx of millions of persons from Eastern and Southern Europe between 1903 and 1914, the American public became concerned about the assimilation of these immigrants. This concern resulted in the passage of an act by congress in 1917 which added the requirement of literacy for naturalization. In 1918 the Federal Immigration and Naturalization Service was authorized to cooperate with the public schools by preparing citizenship textbooks and supplying them free of cost to the schools. By the end of World War I the education of immigrants had become a major activity of the public evening schools. To many persons adult

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<sup>5</sup>Malcolm S. Knowles, The Adult Education Movement in the United States (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston Company, Incorporated, 1962), pp. 53-54.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

education was assumed to be Americanization training.<sup>7</sup> However, these programs helped in gaining public acceptance and support for the policy of public evening schools for adults.<sup>8</sup>

### State Aid

State support for public evening schools came about in several stages. First, permissive legislation granted local school districts authority to operate evening schools for adult classes in specific subject areas.

Second, the development of state support saw the passage of various mandatory requirements for evening schools. For example, Americanization and literacy courses had to be taught in many schools. Also, teachers had to obtain state certification.

Third, legislation was passed which provided for financial assistance to the evening schools. Although direct financial aid was not provided by most states until after 1920, a few made appropriations for public evening schools quite early. New York had provided \$15,000 annually for this purpose starting in 1848. Rhode Island appropriated \$5,000 for public adult evening schools in 1873.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Homer Kempfer, Adult Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Incorporated, 1955), p. 155.

<sup>8</sup>Burton R. Clark, Adult Education in Transition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), pp. 48-49.

<sup>9</sup>Knowles, op. cit., p. 57.

A fourth stage in the rise of state support for adult education was the provision of state-wide services to local school systems through the state departments of education. In 1917, a division of evening and continuation schools was established in the Connecticut State Department of Education, with a full-time supervisor. California established a division of adult education in its State Department of Education in 1920.<sup>10</sup>

### Early Records

Official records pertaining to the growth and development of adult education in the public schools are limited. The United States Office of Education Biennial Survey did not include the number of teachers and pupils in evening and adult schools until 1939. A study by Kempfer in 1948 revealed, "only nineteen state departments of education that collected comprehensive data on general adult education in their school systems."<sup>11</sup> Data that were available resulted mainly from estimates based on the observations of national leaders, sample surveys, and studies of specific state or local school systems.<sup>12</sup>

In spite of limited early statistical data, it was evident that the number of public schools providing adult education courses had increased greatly. A comprehensive study made by the U. S. Office of

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 56ff.

<sup>11</sup>Homer H. Kempfer, "State Programs of General Adult Education," Adult Education Journal, VI (April, 1948), 76.

<sup>12</sup>Knowles, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

Education in 1958 showed an increase in public school adult enrollment from 2,682,786 in the school year 1946-1947 to 4,373,054 in 1956-1957.<sup>13</sup> This study also revealed that state aid for general adult education had increased during the same ten-year period from \$5,419,433 to \$17,927,651.

#### Changes in Scope

At the beginning of the present century public school adult education consisted mainly of a three-part program: (1) regular academic subjects, (2) Americanization Courses, and (3) vocational courses. By the early 1930's and 1940's forces emerged that exerted considerable influence in broadening the curriculum of public school adult education. First, the "need-meeting" doctrine of curriculum development for adults gained wide support among educators.<sup>14</sup> Knowles points out that the acceptance and encouragement of the "need-meeting" doctrine for adult education and "the added impetus of increasing state aid and pressure for quantitative expansion" resulted in a breaking away from the traditional public school adult education curriculum.<sup>15</sup> Personal development and avocational subjects were added, especially in public speaking, vocabulary building, creative

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<sup>13</sup>John Holden, Adult Education Services of State Department of Education. United States Office of Education. Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 31 (Washington D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1959), pp. 2-3.

<sup>14</sup>Eduard C. Lindeman, The Meaning of Adult Education (New York: New Republic, Incorporated, 1926), pp. 8-9.

<sup>15</sup>Knowles, op. cit., p. 136.

writing, and home and family relations.

Second, the trend toward a broadened curriculum received a strong boost with the entrance of the federal government into the field of adult education during the depression years. Started primarily as a relief measure for unemployed teachers, the Federal Emergency programs made federal funds available for projects by states and local educational authorities in six fields: literary education, general adult education, parent education, workers' education, and vocational rehabilitation.

Grattan states that the federal relief program introduced "thousands of people to adult education for the first time, spreading the idea to groups of people and to geographical areas that hitherto had never been able to experience it and judge its utility."<sup>16</sup>

A third force that greatly influenced the public school adult education curriculum was the impact of the veterans educational program following the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, and the Korean G. I. Bill in 1952. As a result, the public schools were forced to place greater stress on counseling, a wider variety of vocational and academic subjects, and greater flexibility in dealing with older students was required. Many schools gave credit toward a diploma for educational experiences in the armed forces, especially on the basis of results from the General Educational Development Test.

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<sup>16</sup>Grattan, op. cit., p. 229.

In spite of the many unsolved problems that remained in the field of public school adult education, by the second half of the 20th century it was established clearly that the American public had assumed the responsibility for providing continuing education for adults. Forward progress was interrupted at times, but the vital precedent had been established.

Louisiana, like many other states, would call upon the experience and wisdom of early national leaders in the public school adult education movement for direction in establishing its own adult education program.

## II. ORIGINS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT ACADEMIC EDUCATION IN LOUISIANA

Concern for adult public school education in Louisiana did not receive much attention until the second decade of the present century. The approach of the U. S. Census for 1920 caused some educational leaders to display interest in the illiteracy rate among adults. Previously, a few classes had been established as a result of special local interest, but they were not of a permanent nature.

Adult education received a strong boost with the entrance of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration into the program. With federal funds available for adult classes, the curriculum was extended.

The veterans educational activities after World War II exerted a strong influence on the direction of adult education in Louisiana. The wide range of courses offered to students enrolled in classes for



veterans further modified the purpose of adult education in this state.

#### Early Local and State Public School Adult Academic Education Programs

Early programs of Adult Education in Louisiana developed at the local level and were intermittent in nature. The presence of many unassimilated foreign-born adults and the high illiteracy rate among native citizens, as revealed by the army during World War I, prompted local authorities to offer Americanization and literacy courses. These programs were limited to the three or four largest cities in Louisiana.<sup>17</sup>

Forthright state interest in adult education was expressed by Superintendent T. H. Harris in 1919 when he wrote the parish superintendents, in part, as follows:

The census of 1910 gives Louisiana more than 300,000 illiterates over ten years of age. This is 29% of the population . . . Beginning with the summer of 1919, it is hoped that the various school boards will be able to attack seriously the problem of eliminating illiteracy . . . employing special teachers . . . who enjoy the confidence of the men and women to be taught.<sup>18</sup>

Robertson pointed out that "very little was accomplished at that time."<sup>19</sup> With the report of the 1920 census Louisiana still showed the

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<sup>17</sup>Statement by M. S. Robertson, personal interview.

<sup>18</sup>Thomas H. Harris, "Illiteracy Doomed," Southern School Work, VII (February, 1919), 298-299.

<sup>19</sup>M. S. Robertson, Public Education in Louisiana After 1898 (Baton Rouge: Bureau of Educational Materials and Research, Louisiana State University, 1952), p. 115.

highest percentage of adult illiterates in the nation.

Early in 1929, Superintendent Harris and Governor Huey P. Long agreed upon a program for a concentrated drive to reduce adult illiteracy in Louisiana. Funds for the campaign were gained from a "malt tax" that was passed at a special session of the Louisiana Legislature in 1928.<sup>20</sup> A twenty-four lesson course was planned in the simple elements of reading, writing, and "numbers." Regular public school teachers were employed to teach the adult classes in the late afternoons and evenings. Other competent persons were engaged to organize and conduct classes whenever the need arose.<sup>21</sup>

The drive against illiteracy was started in February, 1929, and extended through June, 1930. During this period over 100,000 adults were enrolled, more than 80,000 of whom were Negroes. Classes were conducted in all parts of the state. Robertson stated that "Among the Negroes, literacy classes became the order of the day; everyone was eager to join a class."<sup>22</sup> The white illiterates were more reluctant to enroll in the classes and often the teachers had to resort to considerable persuasion to gain their cooperation and confidence.

After the completion of the twenty-four lesson course, most

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<sup>20</sup>Acts of the Legislature, State of Louisiana, No. 4, 1928 Special Session.

<sup>21</sup>Robertson, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>22</sup>M. S. Robertson, Summary of Educational Activities (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1939), pp. 15-17.

of the adult students had learned to read and write on an elementary level. In some cases remarkable progress was noted among the adult students in "number work."

In the summer of 1929, officials of the Rosenwald Fund became interested in Louisiana's effort to reduce adult illiteracy. Alfred K. Stern, son-in-law of Julius Rosenwald, telegraphed Superintendent Harris that the Fund was considering a cash grant to Louisiana to aid its literacy efforts. After the Louisiana program was discussed in a meeting at Chicago between representatives of the state and the Rosenwald Fund, \$50,000 was donated to assist in the literacy campaign.<sup>23</sup>

The 1930 census revealed that Louisiana had reduced its adult illiteracy from 21.9 per cent to 13.5 per cent during the preceding decennial. Although the state showed more progress in overcoming adult illiteracy than any other state, the accomplishment was limited by the fact that Louisiana still ranked 47th among the states in adult literacy.<sup>24</sup>

With the advent of the depression in the early 1930's education at all levels was affected adversely. Funds for the operation of

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<sup>23</sup>Robertson, Public Education in Louisiana After 1898, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>24</sup>United States Bureau of Census, Current Population Reports: Illiteracy of the Population in the United States, By States, 1900 to 1930 and Estimates for 1950 and 1960, Series P-23, No. 8 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1961), pp. 1-2.

public schools were reduced and the adult education program was virtually abandoned. The depression caused a rapid reduction in property values which resulted in a proportionate reduction in property values which resulted in a proportionate loss in the amount of revenue available for public services.

Conditions in education continued to deteriorate until the summer of 1934. At that time the State Department of Education and the Federal Government joined together to usher in a new phase of adult education in Louisiana.

#### Federal Emergency Relief Education Programs

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration, in conjunction with the State Department of Education of Louisiana, inaugurated a new education program for the state, one that provided work to unemployed teachers in instructing adult classes.

In August, 1934, Superintendent Harris sent a circular letter to parish and city school superintendents informing them of the Emergency Education Program and urging that they cooperate fully in implementing the program during the next school year. He stated "that school officials and the relief officials will be responsible for the selection of teachers . . . will endeavor to select jointly people who are qualified to do specific jobs from the list of available persons who are eligible for relief employment."

To assist in the organization and supervision of this new plan, Superintendent Harris appointed Dr. M. S. Robertson as Director of

the Emergency Educational Program for Louisiana. A staff of supervisory aids was organized, and in the late summer of 1934 this group and Dr. Robertson joined similar officials from the states of Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arkansas for a short training course at the University of Texas.<sup>25</sup>

Following this course, Dr. Robertson and his staff immediately went to work establishing and implementing the Emergency Education Program in this state. The plan embraced five phases of work:

1. Literacy classes
2. Vocational classes (Limited in order that there would be no conflict with existing Agriculture and Home Economics classes)
3. Vocational rehabilitation
4. General adult education (Worker's Education, Parent Education, Avocation Training, General Academic Education, General Information Education, Cultural Education)
5. Nursery schools (Limited to a few classes)

During the first year of operation of this new program, more than two thousand teachers were employed and over 88,000 adults were enrolled. In November, 1937, Robertson said in an address to the Louisiana Federation of Women's Clubs that "During the years since 1934, the cooperative program had enrolled about 255,000 adults. Of

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<sup>25</sup>Robertson, op. cit., p. 120.

this number, approximately 60,000 were illiterates."

The implementing of the Federal Emergency Educational Programs as a relief measure marked a significant change in adult classes. Heretofore, efforts were directed mainly toward the elimination of adult illiteracy. In the new program it was necessary to employ only those teachers who had been certified for relief and to permit them to instruct in those subjects for which they were competent to teach. Under this arrangement it frequently occurred that teachers were not available for the needed literacy classes. One of the major outcomes of this dilemma was the broadening in scope of the state's adult education program.

In 1936, the Works Progress Administration listed the following eight major objectives to serve as guides for the Emergency Educational Program:<sup>26</sup>

1. To reduce adult illiteracy and to provide educational opportunities for persons who have been denied the usual privileges of public education
2. To foster and increase understanding on the part of American citizens of economic, political, and social problems which confront the nation and affect the welfare of all citizens
3. To assist in the naturalization of the alien population

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<sup>26</sup>Harry L. Hopkins, Handbook of Procedures, Letter No. 29, Supplement No. 1, Works Progress Administration (Washington: Works Progress Administration, 1936), pp. 1 ff.

of the United States by providing education in the fundamentals of citizenship

4. To strengthen American home and family life through educational service to parents
5. To safeguard the welfare of small children born in underprivileged homes
6. To provide vocational training for underprivileged men and women and to assist the unemployed people to reestablish themselves on a self-supporting basis
7. To help men and women to develop constructive interests to occupy their leisure time
8. To provide opportunities for continuing education for young people whose educational careers were temporarily cut short by the depression

Notwithstanding the broadened federal government interest in adult education, Louisiana school leaders maintained that literacy education was this state's primary objective. In an address to a group of adult education teachers at Baton Rouge in June, 1939, Dr. M. S. Robertson said, "We believe that our state can never command the respect of the other states of the nation or the other nations of the world so long as it can be pointed to as a state infested with a large percentage of adult illiteracy." He pointed out further that the practical elimination of adult illiteracy in this state was an essential step for advancement of Louisiana's general welfare "in social, economic and other ways." The problem was considered not just one for

the illiterate himself, "whether he be white or Negro, but it is a problem for every forward-looking citizen of the state."<sup>27</sup>

Although the major attention of state leaders was centered on illiteracy problems, stress was placed on those adult education activities which provided for improved home and family life. It was assumed that a greater interest would be found in reading, writing, and "number work" when those lessons were centered around problems relating to the home and its improvements. All teachers of adult classes were encouraged to make use of this "type of worthwhile unit organization of teaching materials and activities."

The Emergency Education activities in Louisiana continued to the early 1940's. However, enthusiasm for the program in its later stages had become somewhat dampened. In part, this resulted from a conflict of views between the state and federal officials regarding the administration and operation of the program in Louisiana. Also, it became very difficult to secure competent teachers since educated persons were accepting positions in other fields of activity. Fewer teachers were certified for relief employment as general economic conditions improved.

The Federal Emergency Educational Program in Louisiana was terminated on February 1, 1943. This action grew out of the liquidation of the Work Projects Administration by the Federal Government in

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<sup>27</sup>Copy of address located in personal files of M. S. Robertson.



late 1942. Dr. Robertson announced the official closing of the program in the following letter addressed to the school superintendents of the state:<sup>28</sup>

Gentlemen:

No doubt you have read reports that the Work Projects Administration had been given an honorable discharge by President Roosevelt and it now is in a process of liquidation. It had been determined that the Adult Education Program will cease its activities on February 1, 1943, and that all classes will cease prior to that date.

It is regrettable that the Adult Education Program must be closed. During the years of its existence, many worthy citizens have been given a wonderful opportunity to acquire a limited education which, under normal conditions, would have been denied them forever. Although, the chief efforts of the Adult Education Program have been directed toward wiping out illiteracy in Louisiana, many additional phases of education were stressed. The Adult Education Program has had an interesting history, and its problems have been many. The value of the Program, when considered in terms of services rendered, will be found to be great even though difficult to measure.

One of the chief factors responsible for the success of the WPA Adult Education Program had been the spirit of the cooperation on the part of local citizenry. You are to be congratulated on the part you played in the program. Without your assistance many persons in need of a limited education would have been denied its benefits, and many teachers in need of jobs would have suffered.

As State Supervisor of the Adult Education Program, I take this means of personally thanking

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<sup>28</sup>Letter located in personal files of M. S. Robertson.

you for the many courtesies which you extended me during the years I have served in this capacity. Although the WPA Program is closing, this does not mean that the need for Adult Education is over. Louisiana has the highest per cent of illiteracy of all the states, and the more effort we put behind Adult Education Programs the quicker we will erase that blot on our state. The work of the WPA in this field should serve as a stimulus to renewed efforts to incorporate Adult Education in the regular school program. I urge you to seize every opportunity to advance the cause of Adult Education in your parish in the years to come. You can always count on my cooperation in the work.

I wish you great success in your work and extend to you kindest personal regards.

Yours sincerely,

M. S. Robertson

Thus, the end came to another phase in the development of Louisiana's adult education program. With the state's interest now focused on the new prosperity generated by the War in Europe, and America serving as "the arsenal of Democracy," adult academic education at the public school level was again abandoned.

Following World War II, sundry conditions emerged which once again attracted the interest of Louisiana's leaders to the need of public school adult academic education.

#### The Public School Adult Academic Education Program After World War II

Veterans Education. During the period immediately following World War II, Louisiana was engaged in readjusting to a peacetime socio-economic pattern. The more immediate problems of adequate

housing, civilian employment, reunion of families, and the desire to acquire goods that were scarce during the war years captured the attention of most people in the state. Amidst this reconversion process adult academic education in Louisiana was forced to wait for an outside stimulus for its revival.

In January, 1949, a contract was signed by the officials of the Veterans Administration and the Louisiana State Superintendent of Education for the implementation of a program for veterans education in this state.<sup>29</sup> This contract provided for the instruction in academic and specialized courses through the public schools in all the parishes in Louisiana. Veterans had the opportunity to enroll in academic training from the first through the ninth grades, and in specialized training courses according to their past educational achievement.

The courses for veterans were started on April 4, 1949, and by June of that year 2,011 had enrolled.<sup>30</sup> The program reached its highest point in 1951, when 34,763 veterans were in training in Louisiana's schools below the college level. More than eighty per cent of all veterans enrolled during the entire program gained instruction below

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<sup>29</sup>One-Hundredth Annual Report for the Session 1948-49, Bulletin No. 699 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1950), pp. 66-70.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

the ninth grade level.<sup>31</sup>

Renewed State Interest. Obviously, the Veterans Educational Program was not open to all needy adults of the state, and its status as a public educational project was rejected by some school leaders. However, the impact of the veterans program in Louisiana served as a catalyst in stimulating renewed interest and financial support for public school academic education for all adults.

In 1949, educational and political leaders advocated a new program of adult education supported by state appropriations. The avowed purpose of the program was to expand educational opportunity so that all adults in need of further instruction would gain the desired help in certain designated and approved schools. The instruction was planned mainly for elementary subjects. The needs of adults at the local level would determine the precise nature of the course.<sup>32</sup>

The effort of adult educational proponents to gain state financial support for their program was partially achieved in 1950. In that year the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 252, which appropriated \$25,000 each year for two years, "for the purpose of stimulating, promoting and providing a program for the development of Adult Education

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<sup>31</sup>One-Hundred Third Annual Report for the Session 1951-1952, Bulletin No. 758 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1952), p. 64.

<sup>32</sup>Shelby M. Jackson, Louisiana Adult Education Program (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1949), pp. 1-2.

on the elementary and secondary level, to aid in eliminating adult illiteracy and to provide a framework for the continued development of the program in meeting the needs of the people."<sup>33</sup>

State Superintendent of Education Shelby M. Jackson proclaimed that this new program would aid greatly in eliminating adult illiteracy and would give opportunity to individuals of this state to obtain economic security. Unemployment would be reduced by providing a more flexible working population. The democratic ideal would become more attainable, and wider personal and social satisfaction experienced.<sup>34</sup>

With the passage of Act 252 by the 1950 Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Public School Adult Academic Education Program was recognized as a part of the total program for education in Louisiana. The limitation of funds restricted the operation of the program for the first few years. However, by 1954 many of the parish school systems had established adult classes and the total enrollment was in excess of 12,000. There was a period of sharp decline in the number of students enrolled; however, the trend reversed, and by 1963 more than 13,000 adult students were in attendance. Although a difference prevailed regarding the effectiveness of the program in certain areas, it appeared to have the support of most school people.

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<sup>33</sup>Acts of the Legislature, State of Louisiana, No. 252, 1950 Session.

<sup>34</sup>Shelby M. Jackson, Adult Education in Louisiana, Four Years of Progress, Bulletin No. 732 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1952), pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER III

NEEDS AND PURPOSES OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

ADULT ACADEMIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

IN LOUISIANA

Early educational leaders of Louisiana expressed deep concern about the low educational level of many adults. In 1919, Superintendent Harris called attention to the literacy needs of mature citizens.<sup>1</sup> Leo M. Favrot and A. C. Lewis reported the seriousness of no schooling among thousands of adult Negroes in Louisiana.<sup>2</sup>

In 1927, the Annual Report called attention to the need for educational opportunities for adults.<sup>3</sup> A decade later M. S. Robertson stated that "It is impossible to operate a great state like Louisiana with a large percentage of the adult population unable to read and write."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas H. Harris, "Illiteracy Doomed," Southern School Work, VII (February 1919), 298-299.

<sup>2</sup>Leo M. Favrot and A. C. Lewis, Report on Special Activities in Negro Education in Louisiana, Bulletin No. 100 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1929), pp. 1 ff.

<sup>3</sup>Annual Report for the Session 1925-26, Bulletin No. 108 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1927), pp. 16-17.

<sup>4</sup>M. S. Robertson, Adult Education in Louisiana, (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1938), p. 5.

In 1952, Superintendent Shelby M. Jackson reviewed what he considered the needs and purposes of adult education in Louisiana.<sup>5</sup> It was his belief that "the people of Louisiana represent this state's greatest resource" and that maximum development and growth of "the potentialities of Louisiana's people offer the greatest hope for the future." He further maintained that the purpose of adult education was to "meet the needs of the people." It would, in his opinion, "aid in the elimination of adult illiteracy" and "provide opportunities to individuals of this state so that they may obtain economic security." Unemployment would be decreased because of "a more flexible working force," and contribution would be made to the welfare of "citizens by improvement of agriculture, business and industry."

#### I. LITERACY PROBLEM

The fundamental goal of adult academic education in Louisiana was initially directed toward eliminating or, at least, greatly reducing this state's high adult illiteracy rate. At various times the emphasis was shifted to general educational upgrading or preparation in academic skills related to immediate employment, but basically the objective was to overcome illiteracy. In more recent years emphasis was shifted to other areas.

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<sup>5</sup>Shelby M. Jackson, Adult Education in Louisiana, Four Years of Progress, Bulletin No. 732 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1952), p. 5.

Louisiana had long experienced the need for literacy classes to help overcome the deficiencies among its inadequately educated adults. At the turn of the century more than 38.0 per cent of the population, ten years of age and older, was illiterate. In 1910 the rate was 29.0 per cent, in 1920 nearly 22 per cent, and in 1930, 13.5 per cent was illiterate.<sup>6</sup> Louisiana had the highest per cent of adult illiteracy in the nation in 1910 and 1920; in 1930 it ranked second.

This deplorable educational condition in Louisiana was attributed to various factors. In an address to a group of adult education teachers at Baton Rouge in January, 1938, Dr. M. S. Robertson traced the causative events back to the post-Civil War period, contending that "the economic depletion incident to the Civil War, the carpet-bag rule, and the reconstruction of the state government left small funds for the provision of any educational facilities, even for the small children."<sup>7</sup>

Another interpretation was given by Shugg, who felt that the high illiteracy level was the result of a legacy from the late 19th century political, social, and economic milieu.<sup>8</sup> It was charged that

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<sup>6</sup>United States Bureau of Census. Current Population Reports: Illiteracy of the Population in the States, by States, 1900 to 1930 and Estimates for 1950, and 1960, Series P. 23, No. 8 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1961), pp. 1-2.

<sup>7</sup>Copy of address located in personal files of M. S. Robertson.

<sup>8</sup>Roger W. Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1939), pp. 27-28.



during this era Louisiana's destiny was in the firm grip of a rural "landed aristocracy" and an urban "commercial elite" that frowned upon public education, particularly for the masses. Thus, popular education sorely lacked both responsible civic leadership and financial support.<sup>9</sup>

Shugg contended that Louisiana was an agricultural state and the owners of the large plantations were business men and not necessarily educators or sociologists. In too many cases the concern was for immediate economic gain with little regard for the future welfare of the state. The share-cropper system required little preparation other than physical fitness. Education of a field hand was not necessary for the maintenance of the economic status quo. "In the absence of complicated machinery, children of school age were useful, often vital, in performing those daily tasks essential to the family's economic survival."<sup>10</sup>

This pattern of educational neglect was very similar among the multitude of poor in the large cities of Louisiana. To help meet the demands on the family purse, wives, sons, and daughters went to work in factories, shops or private homes. In New Orleans during the 1890's, "the number of children at work between the ages of ten and fifteen nearly doubled, increasing from 31,847 to 61,047."<sup>11</sup> The growing

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 234 ff.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 294-295.

industrialization of New Orleans and other cities in Louisiana was based, to a great extent, on the availability of cheap labor by women and children.

In many instances the above conditions existed in both the rural and urban areas of the state during the first half of the 20th century. Many of the adult illiterates and near-illiterates of today are the products of the influence of these limited educational opportunities during their childhood.

## II. EDUCATIONAL UPGRADING AND EMPLOYMENT

The purpose of Federal Emergency Education activities in Louisiana as a segment of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration marked a change in the type of courses offered in adult classes. As previously stated, adult education had been directed toward the elimination of illiteracy. Now, the employment of only those teachers who were certified for relief work brought about an expansion of the adult curriculum. Classes were organized to provide upgrading and educational opportunities for persons who were denied the usual "privilege of public education." This feature was adopted by the state and made a part of the adult education curriculum following the revival of the program after World War II. Classes were organized for adults who had dropped out of school in order to provide them the opportunity to upgrade themselves, even to secure a high-school equivalency

certificate or a regular high school diploma.<sup>12</sup>

Provisions for upgrading adult educational levels assumed a significant position after World War II. The growing industrial establishment in Louisiana had precluded the additional employment of few adults who had not attained at least a high school educational foundation. Technological changes had created new kinds of employment which required higher education and training. At the same time, thousands of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs were eliminated completely.<sup>13</sup> Since the early 1950's, automation in Louisiana's industries was causing a pronounced effect on the employment scene. In 1962, the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana reported that 20,000 jobs had been lost in this state since 1953.<sup>14</sup> Much of this loss was brought about by mechanization and automation, both on the farm and in industry. According to the Louisiana Employment Service, this state was to experience a substantial increase in the number of people seeking work, and the educational requirements of jobs would continue to rise in every category.

This employment picture posed a momentous challenge to the

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<sup>12</sup>One-Hundredth Annual Report for the Session, 1948-1949, Bulletin No. 699 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1950), pp. 68-69.

<sup>13</sup>W. Willard Wirtz, Design for Community Action, Bureau of Labor Standards, U. S. Dept. of Labor, Bulletin No. 248 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962), pp. 1-3.

<sup>14</sup>Editorial in the Lake Charles American Press, November 4, 1962.

adult citizens of Louisiana who had limited schooling and the leaders of the adult educational program. The United States Census of 1940 reported that in Louisiana 35.7 per cent of all adults, 25 years of age and older, were functional illiterates. The percentages for the same age group was 28.7 in 1950, and 21.3 in the 1960 census.

Figures 1 through 3 show the percentage of functional illiterates, 25 years of age and over, by parishes for each of the census reports.<sup>15</sup> As late as 1960, almost sixty-eight per cent of Louisiana's adult population, 25 years of age and older, did not have a high school education.<sup>16</sup> Figures 4 through 6 show the percentage of adults, 25 years of age and older, with less than a high school education for each parish of the state as reported by the census bureau for the years 1940, 1950, and 1960.

### III. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROBLEM

The first complete Louisiana school census in 1945 revealed that 24,000 children between the ages of seven and sixteen, inclusive, were not enrolled in school.<sup>17</sup> Attendance authorities attributed the low educational attainment to the fact that a substantial number of persons had failed to enroll in any school during their childhood, and

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<sup>15</sup>U. S. Bureau of Census. Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Statistics collected by Director, School Attendance Section, State Department of Education, 1945.





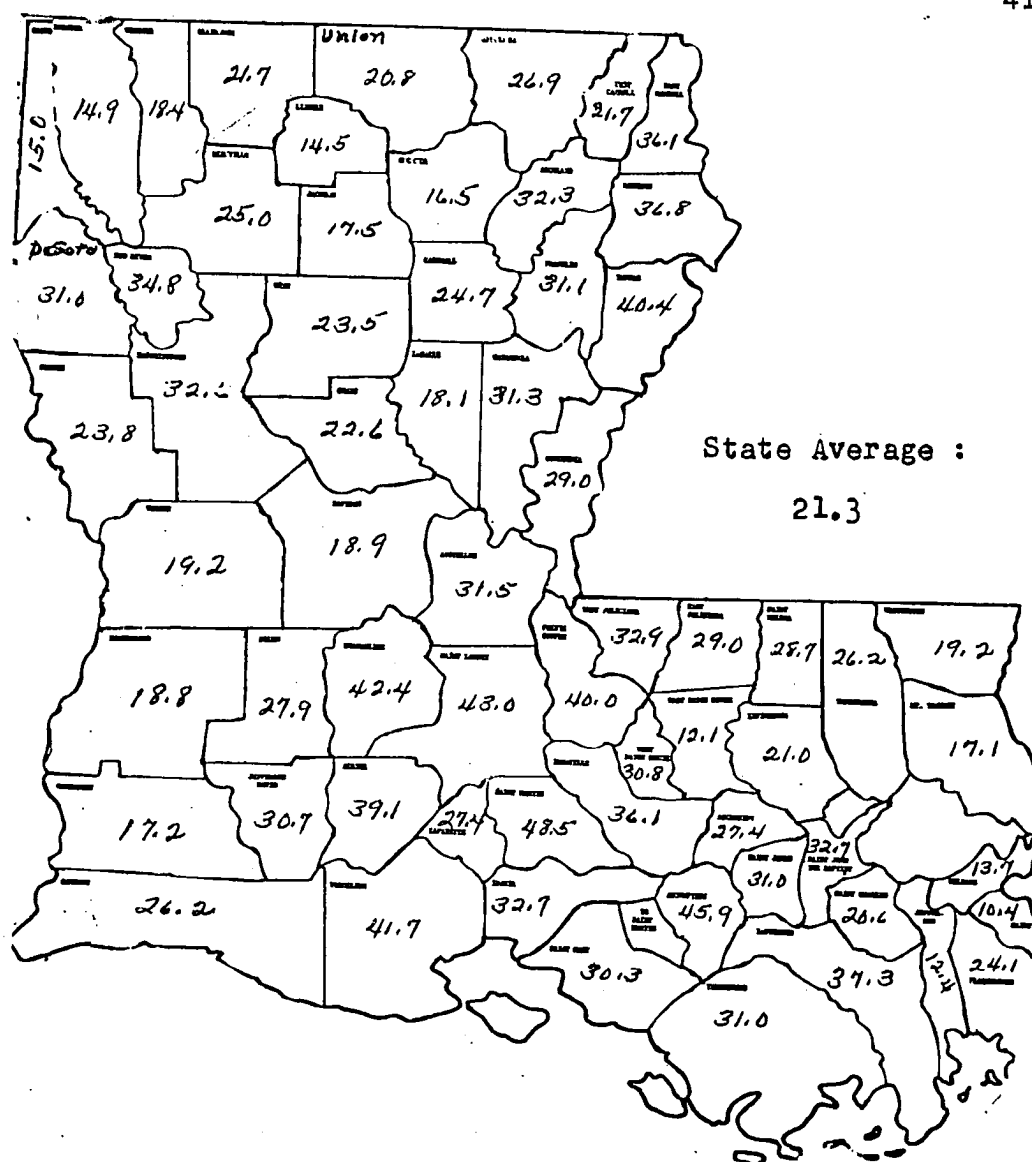


FIGURE 3

PERCENTAGE OF FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY AMONG  
THE ADULTS 25 YEARS OF AGE AND  
OVER, BY PARISHES  
1960

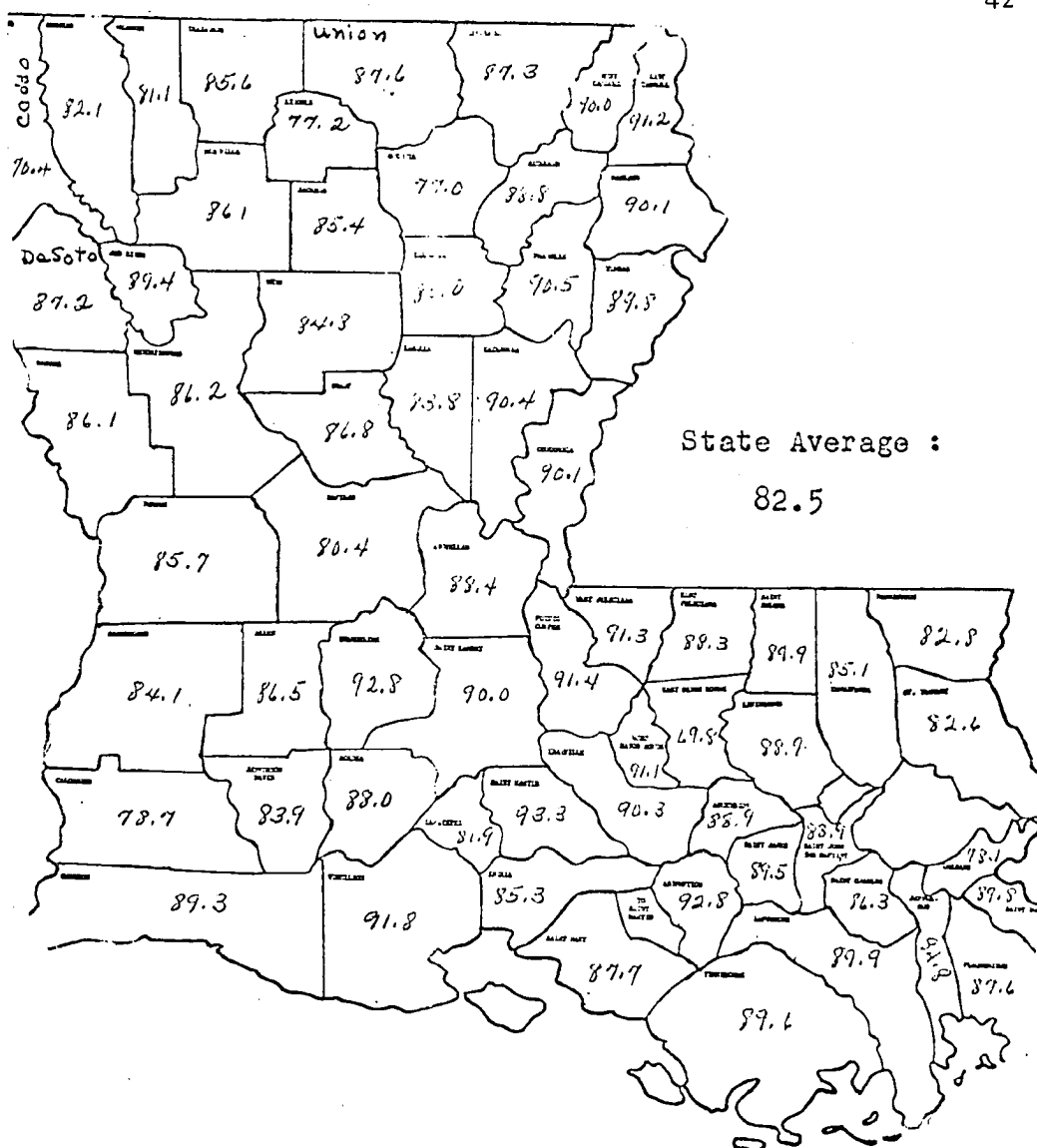


FIGURE 4

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS 25 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER  
WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION  
BY PARISHES  
1940



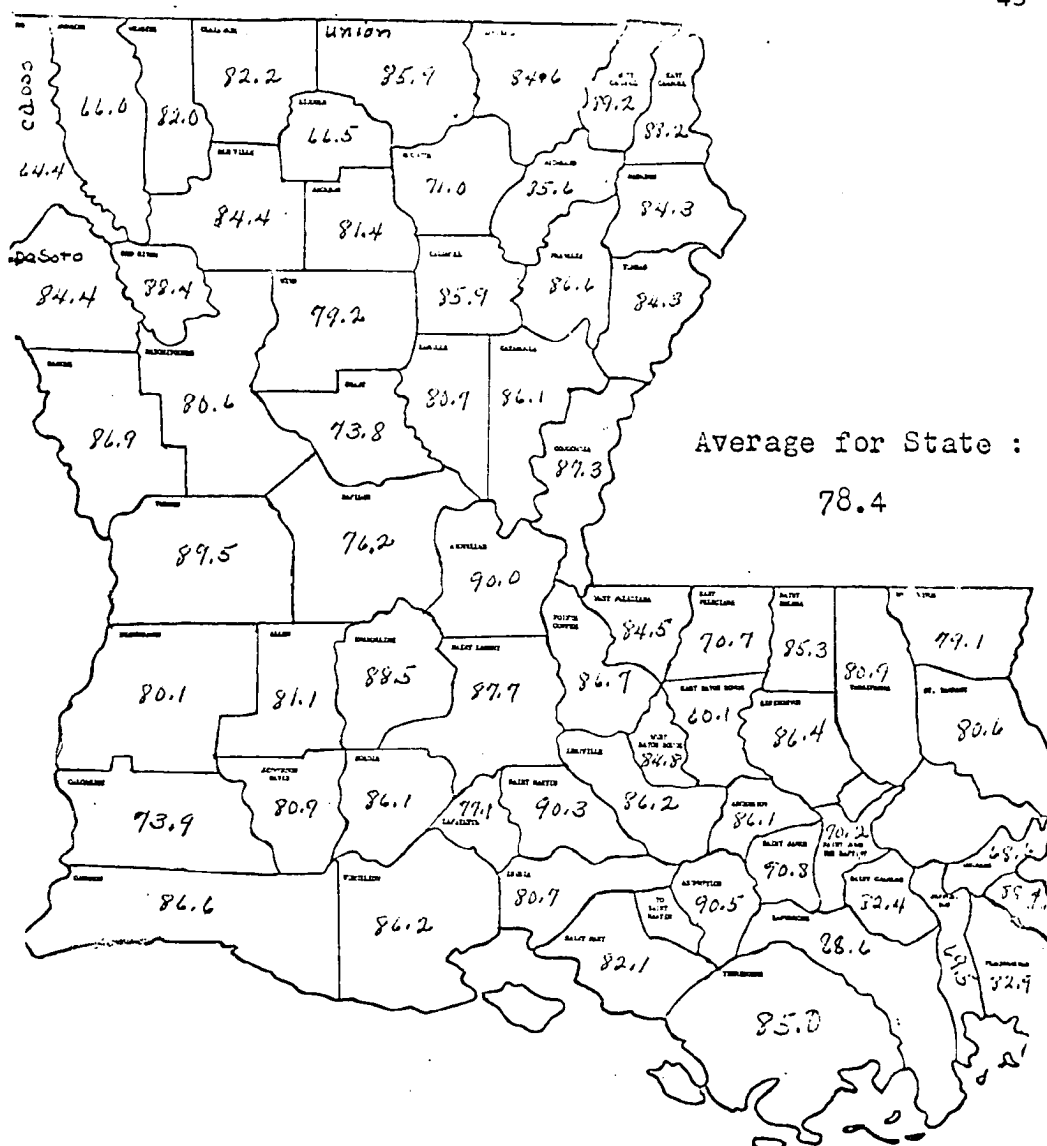


FIGURE 5

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS 25 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER  
WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION  
BY PARISHES  
1950

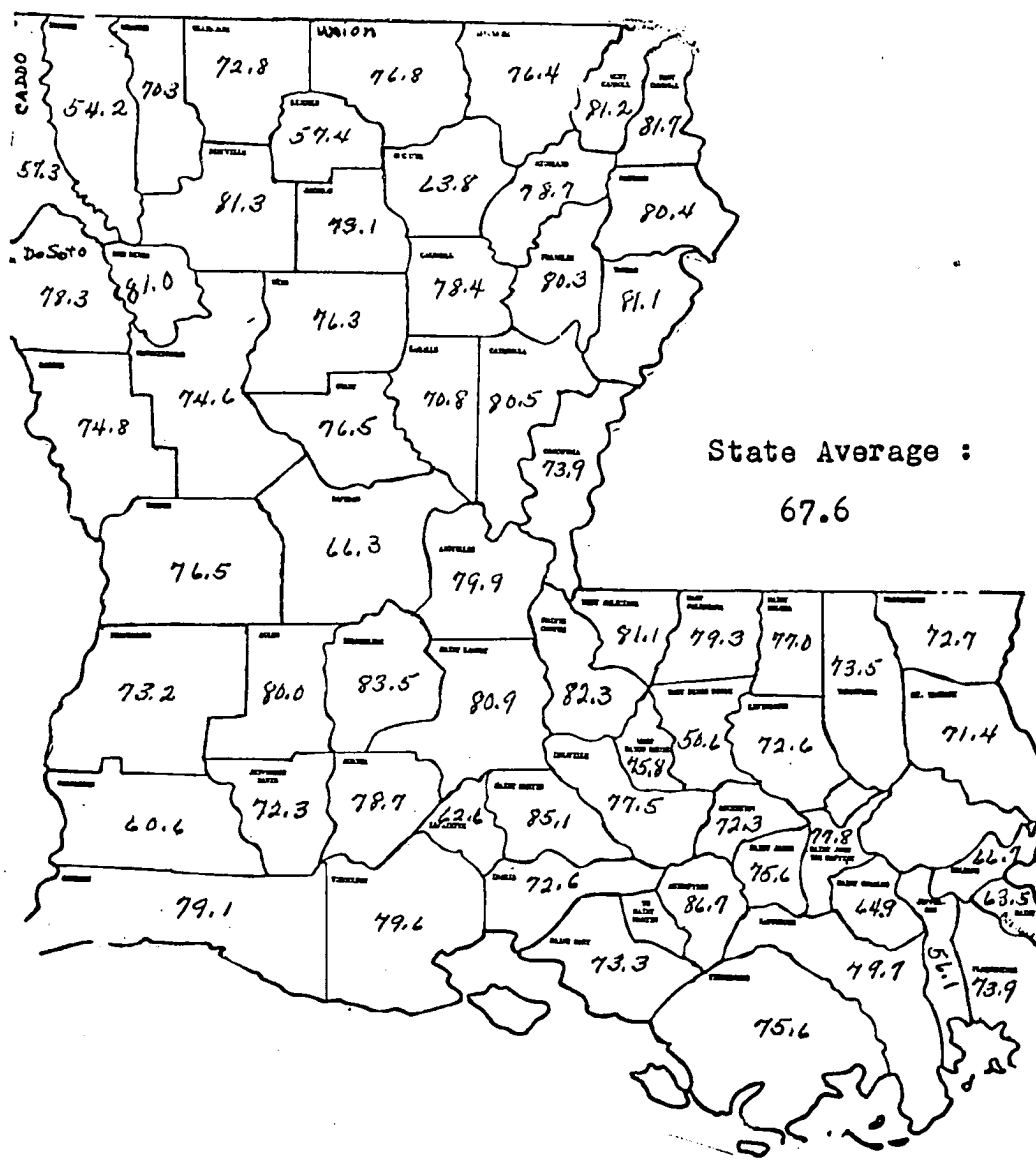


FIGURE 6

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS 25 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER  
WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION  
BY PARISHES  
1960

among those who had enrolled, many dropped out before the completion of the ninth grade.

Additional attendance statistics showed that in a comparison of the census of educables in Louisiana as of January 1, 1946 with the registration in all schools at the end of the 1945-46 session, there were 107,953 pupils who had either failed to enroll or had dropped from school during the term. This represented 17.6 per cent of the 614,042 educables reported in the school census.<sup>18</sup> Table II gives a comparison of the census of educables, as of January 1, 1946, and the total registration in all schools at the end of the 1945-46 session in each of the parishes.

A study of school attendance for the 1947-48 session conducted by Dr. M. S. Robertson for the Bureau of Educational Materials, Statistics, and Research, Louisiana State University, showed that from a total of 664,833 educables, only 78.17 per cent were registered in school.<sup>19</sup> Further 81.65 per cent of the white educables were registered in school as compared to 72.69 per cent of the Negro educables.

The Attendance Section of the State Department of Education in a study which compared the number of educables as of January 1, 1956 with the total registration at the end of the 1956-57 session found that

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<sup>18</sup>Study made by School Attendance Section, State Department of Education, 1947.

<sup>19</sup>M. S. Robertson, What About The Other Twenty-Two? A study of School Attendance in Louisiana, Education Research. Bulletin No. 1 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1949), pp. 12-13.

TABLE II  
CENSUS OF EDUCABLES, JANUARY 1, 1946, COMPARED  
WITH TOTAL SCHOOL REGISTRATION, END  
OF 1945 - 46 SESSION  
BY PARISHES

Parish	Total Census of Educables	Total Regis- tration	Difference	Percentage in Census not in School
Acadia . . . . .	13,221	10,038	3,183	24.10
Allen . . . . .	4,625	3,804	821	17.80
Ascension . . . . .	5,322	4,660	662	12.40
Assumption. . . . .	4,571	3,580	991	21.70
Avoyelles . . . . .	10,684	8,746	1,938	18.10
Beauregard. . . . .	4,085	4,050	35	0.90
Bienville . . . . .	6,568	5,333	1,235	18.80
Bossier . . . . .	8,237	6,565	1,672	20.30
Caddo . . . . .	36,735	28,781	7,954	21.70
Calcasieu . . . . .	12,190	10,077	2,113	17.30
Caldwell. . . . .	3,440	2,811	629	18.30
Cameron . . . . .	1,720	1,336	384	22.30
Catahoula . . . . .	3,802	3,147	655	17.20
Claiborne . . . . .	8,036	6,734	1,302	16.20
Concordia . . . . .	4,019	3,096	923	23.00
De Soto . . . . .	8,124	6,937	1,187	14.60
East Baton Rouge. .	24,491	21,526	2,965	12.10
East Carroll. . . .	5,043	3,662	1,381	27.40
East Feliciana. . .	4,012	3,374	638	15.90
Evangeline. . . . .	8,040	7,433	607	7.50
Franklin. . . . .	8,277	7,175	1,102	13.30
Grant . . . . .	3,704	3,807	-103	-----
Iberia. . . . .	9,470	7,787	1,683	17.80
Iberville . . . . .	6,686	5,490	1,196	17.90
Jackson . . . . .	4,686	4,000	686	14.60
Jefferson . . . . .	15,355	12,431	2,924	19.00
Jefferson Davis . .	6,695	5,598	1,097	16.40
Lafayette . . . . .	12,666	9,496	3,170	25.00
Lafourche . . . . .	10,613	8,312	2,301	21.70
LaSalle . . . . .	3,309	2,943	366	11.10
Lincoln . . . . .	6,599	5,578	1,021	15.50
Livingston. . . . .	4,953	4,032	921	18.60
Madison . . . . .	4,493	3,702	791	17.60
Morehouse . . . . .	7,243	5,870	1,373	19.00

TABLE II (continued)

Parish	Total Census of Educables	Total Regis- tration	Difference	Percentage in Census not in School
Natchitoches. . . .	10,733	9,083	1,650	15.40
Orleans . . . . .	106,540	89,759	16,781	15.80
Ouachita* . . . . .	15,230	12,387	2,843	18.70
Plaquemines . . . .	3,465	2,237	1,228	35.40
Pointe Coupee . . .	6,397	4,612	1,785	27.90
Rapides . . . . .	20,098	16,509	3,589	17.90
Red River . . . . .	4,013	3,277	736	18.30
Richland. . . . .	8,256	6,696	1,560	18.90
Sabine. . . . .	6,568	5,451	1,117	17.00
St. Bernard . . . .	2,200	1,457	743	33.80
St. Charles . . . .	3,474	2,802	672	19.30
St. Helena . . . .	2,786	2,358	428	15.40
St. James . . . . .	4,259	3,402	857	20.10
St. John the Baptist	4,158	3,227	931	22.40
St. Landry. . . . .	23,723	17,799	5,924	25.00
St. Martin. . . . .	7,707	5,677	2,030	26.30
St. Mary. . . . .	8,981	7,151	1,830	20.40
St. Tammany . . . .	6,555	5,762	793	12.10
Tangipahoa. . . . .	12,041	10,760	1,281	10.60
Tensas. . . . .	3,667	2,997	670	18.30
Terrebonne. . . . .	10,529	8,008	2,521	23.90
Union . . . . .	5,649	4,818	831	14.70
Vermilion . . . . .	10,687	8,007	2,680	25.10
Vernon. . . . .	5,557	5,114	443	8.00
Washington. . . . .	5,685	5,152	533	9.40
Webster . . . . .	9,884	8,524	1,360	13.80
West Baton Rouge. .	2,760	2,097	663	24.00
West Carroll. . . .	5,510	4,766	744	13.50
West Feliciana. . .	2,399	2,052	347	14.50
Winn. . . . .	4,067	3,265	802	19.70
Lake Charles. . . .	5,048	5,115	+67	-----
Bogalusa. . . . .	3,702	3,857	+155	-----
TOTAL . . . . .	614,042	506,089	107,953	17.60

\*Includes the City of Monroe

10.59 per cent of the 828,532 educables were not in school.

In a bulletin entitled The Holding Power of Louisiana's Schools the seriousness of the need for retaining pupils in school was revealed.<sup>20</sup> This study traced the enrollment progress made by pupils entering the first grade in 1942-43 and completing the twelfth grade in 1953-54. The total first grade enrollment in 1942-43 was 80,056 pupils. In 1953-54, twelve years later, only 17,278 pupils from the original first grade registration graduated from high school. This represented 21.58 per cent of the original group of pupils. However, the bulletin indicated that by the end of 1961-62 session the percentage graduating from high school in relation to the original first grade enrollment had increased to 41.19.

Attendance data obtained from the Attendance Section of the State Department of Education disclosed further that less than one-third of the pupils who registered in first grade for the 1942-43 session remained in school long enough to reach the tenth grade. Figure 7 shows the percentage of enrollment remaining in school each year from grades one through ten compared to the original first grade registration for the group.

Further study of these data showed that out of 40,546 students enrolled in the eighth grade in 1953-54, only 24,910, or 61.4 per cent,

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<sup>20</sup>J. Berton Gremillion and Normand H. Edwards, The Holding Power of Louisiana's Schools, Research and Statistics, Section, Bulletin No. 985 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1963), pp. 1 ff.

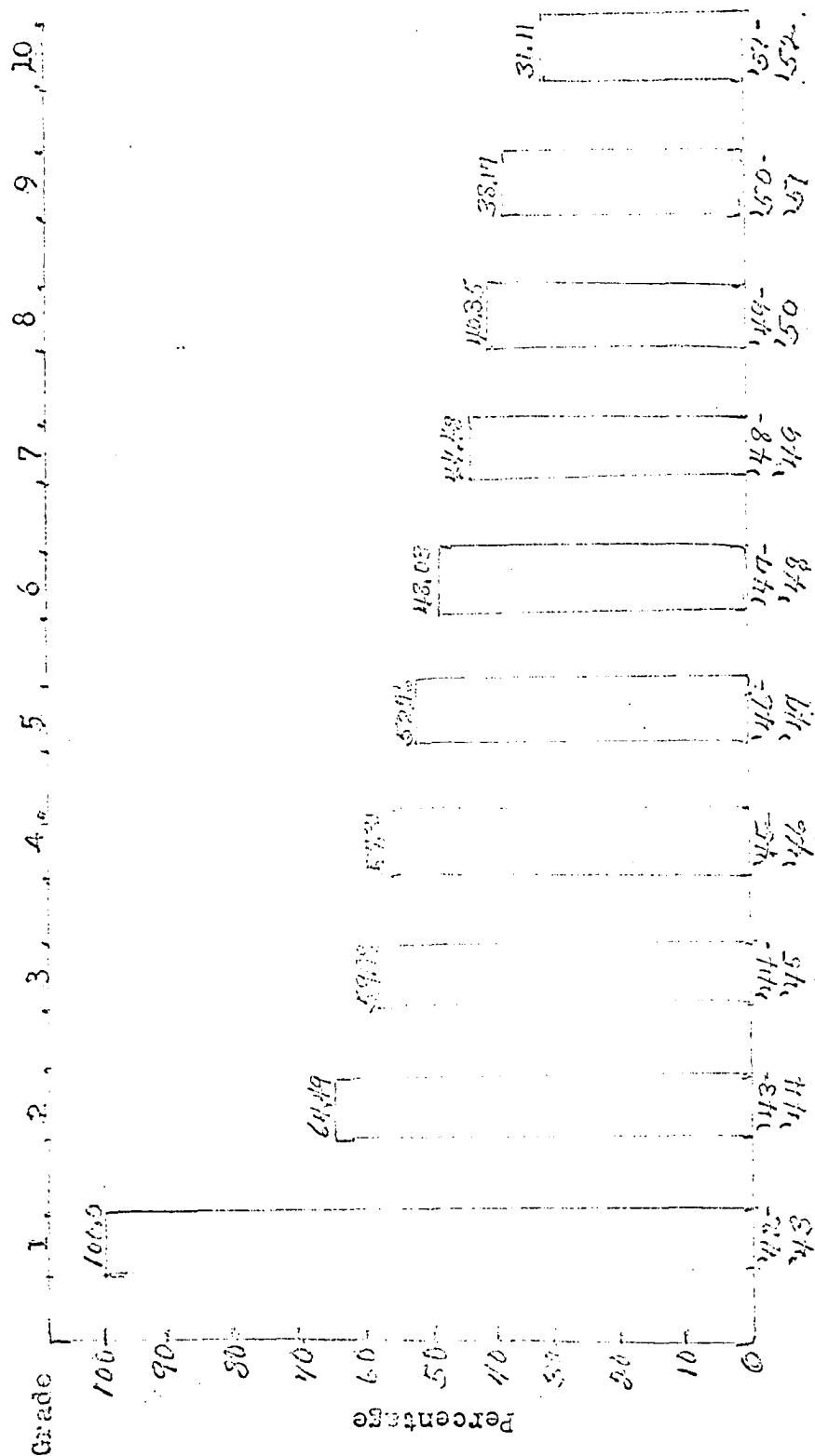


FIGURE 7

PERCENTAGE OF ENROLLMENT REMAINING IN SCHOOL EACH YEAR FROM GRADES ONE TO TEN COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL FIRST GRADE REGISTRATION FOR THE GROUP

entered the twelfth grade four years later. In 1961-62, over 36.0 per cent of the students who were in the eighth grade four years earlier failed to enroll in the twelfth grade.

Through personal interview with educators in charge of the Adult Academic Education Program, it was learned that the facts reported by the foregoing studies and related findings were used to support their position regarding the need and importance for continuous adult educational activities in Louisiana.<sup>21</sup>

In practice if not in theory, the upgrading of adult educational levels, with a view to overcoming the barriers to employment and job advancement, had become the principal goal of the program.

#### IV. SOCIAL AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES

A leader of Adult Education in Louisiana had placed emphasis on the need to foster an increased understanding among adult students of the socio-economic and political problems which confronted the state and the nation. He nourished the principle that a democratic government depended for its continuity on the foundation of an enlightened and informed citizenry.<sup>22</sup> Further, democracy could function at its best only when every individual had an opportunity to

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<sup>21</sup>Personal interview with A. Larriviere and C. C. Couvillion, April, 1963.

<sup>22</sup>M. S. Robertson, "Future Outlook for Adult Education in Louisiana," The Louisiana Colored Teachers' Journal, XI (December-January, 1937-1938), 12.



develop his own unique personality, and when he was also conscious of and fitted to assume his responsibilities as an adult member of society.

It was felt that adults of the community could be taught what their responsibilities were in helping the community grow and become stronger. Freedom depended upon everyone's contributing his best towards the maintenance and enrichment of American institutions. Superintendent Jackson believed that it was the duty of a citizen to help create intelligent and well-founded public opinion, for in a democracy public opinion tends to rule.<sup>23</sup> The adult citizen had a duty "to seek the truth and to base his opinion on the best available information." It was further propounded that "education in its broadest sense is preparation for complete living and good useful citizenship." Society must give each individual the opportunity to learn how to take his place as a "producing unit in our economy, striving to produce as much goods and services as he consumes, or in some way help to improve the life of the community." He indicated that the mature person would be helped to overcome the lack of previous training and stimulated to become a more satisfied individual, contributing to the social and spiritual life of the community.

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<sup>23</sup>Shelby M. Jackson, "The Need for a Program of Adult Education in Louisiana," Address to First Annual Adult Education Conference, Louisiana State University, February, 1955.

The need for adult education was founded upon the assumption that such a program would contribute to the elimination of illiteracy, the development of personal, social, economic, and civic competency of Louisiana's adult citizens. These assumptions are examined more closely in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE LOUISIANA PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT ACADEMIC EDUCATION PROGRAM IN OPERATION, 1920-1949

Public school leaders of Louisiana during the first decades of the present century were aware of the pressing problem of adult illiteracy. They mustered all resources available to them at the time in an effort to cope with the situation. Some success was achieved; however, the onrush of events produced more serious problems which deflected attention from adult academic education.

#### I. EARLY PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT ACADEMIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS, 1920-1933

Records pertaining to adult academic education instruction in Louisiana prior to 1920 are very limited. Fragmentary reports indicate that an active program of Americanization and literacy training was offered in a few of the Orleans Parish schools shortly after World War I. Citizenship textbooks were prepared by the Federal Immigration and Naturalization Service and supplied to the schools free of charge.<sup>1</sup>

Since these courses were offered in cooperation with the local

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<sup>1</sup>M. S. Robertson, Public Education in Louisiana After 1898 (Baton Rouge: Bureau of Educational Materials and Research, Louisiana State University, 1952), pp. 114-115.

school authorities, there was limited evidence that they were accepted as a responsibility of the State Department of Education.

Organization and Administration of the First  
Statewide Literacy Campaign

In the summer of 1919, Superintendent T. H. Harris encouraged the educational leaders of the various parish and city school systems to inaugurate classes for adults in an effort to help eliminate illiteracy in Louisiana. No special state funds were available for these adult classes, and in the schools where they were organized, instruction was provided on a voluntary basis.

Teachers organized the adult pupils into small groups and met them at convenient places for an hour or two during the day, two times each week. No suitable textbook was available and each teacher had to improvise the program in relation to the needs of the class. At the end of three months the adult student was expected to read "fairly well" from newspapers, agricultural bulletins, and similar materials. He had to write simple personal letters in a "legible hand" and he was expected to make simple calculations in the fundamental operations of arithmetic.<sup>2</sup>

Due to the lack of interest on the part of needy adults and the voluntary nature of the program, this initial effort to combat the high

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<sup>2</sup>T. H. Harris, "Illiteracy Doomed," Southern School Work, VII (February, 1919), 298-299.

illiteracy level in Louisiana came to a temporary halt following the 1920 United States Census. In the view of a contemporary educational leader, the program was both "short-lived and ineffective."<sup>3</sup>

In 1929-1930, a series of courses was conducted in another effort to eliminate adult illiteracy in Louisiana. This plan had the approval of the State Board of Education and was directed by M. S. Robertson. The superintendent and his assistants organized the campaign in each parish. Where it was advisable, leading citizens were urged to take an active part in organizing the local drive. The parish was divided into a number of districts, white and Negro. The limits of each district coincided with the territory served by the school. The area was under the direction of the school principal, or a capable teacher assisted by a committee of citizens. It was the duty of each committee to arouse an interest in the campaign and to direct the work of locating and enrolling illiterates in school.<sup>4</sup>

#### Curriculum and Teaching Procedure

A twenty-four lesson course was prepared for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. Three class meetings were conducted weekly for a period of eight weeks. The teacher gave both individual and group instruction. Adult-student assistants were used for individual

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<sup>3</sup>Statement by Dr. M. S. Robertson, personal interview.

<sup>4</sup>M. S. Robertson, Manual For Teachers of Adult Illiteracy in Louisiana, Bulletin No. 146 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1929), pp. 6-7.

coaching at home. Often this came from a younger brother, sister, or even a child.<sup>5</sup>

A textbook for reading was furnished by the State Department of Education. Each adult student who enrolled and agreed to do the prescribed work was given a copy of the textbook. Each student who completed the twenty-four lessons and learned to read and write was given a diploma signed by the Governor, the President of the State School Board, the State Superintendent of Education, the President of the Parish School Board, the Parish Superintendent of Schools, and the student's teacher.

#### Finances

Funds for waging the literacy campaign were gained mainly from a malt tax and a Grant of \$50,000 by Julius Rosenwald of Chicago. The total expended in the 1929-1930 session for adult education was \$286,932.90.<sup>6</sup> Every parish in the state offered courses for adults. Over 100,000 men and women had been enrolled, and most had learned to read and write.<sup>7</sup>

The salaries paid to teachers employed in the program were:

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>6</sup>Eighty-First Annual Report for the Session 1929-30, Bulletin No. 186 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1930), pp. 14-15.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

- (1). White teachers were paid \$1.00 per lesson. The maximum salary paid any white teacher employed full time and working with several classes was restricted to \$100.00 per month.
- (2). Negro teachers were paid \$1.50 per lesson. The maximum salary paid any Negro teacher employed full time and working with several classes, was restricted to \$60.00 per month.<sup>8</sup>

### A Final Drive

The educational leaders of Louisiana were somewhat comforted by the census report of 1930. The state had made some progress in reducing the percentage of adult illiteracy; however, much remained to be accomplished.

In the fall of 1931, a limited number of classes for illiterate adults were organized. The scope of this new program had to be restricted as a result of the shortage of funds produced by the initial effects of the oncoming depression. No class was permitted to have less than ten students. Teachers were urged to accept the younger adults for instruction as it was felt that they could profit from the program. Persons under eighteen years of age were not enrolled.<sup>9</sup>

The parish superintendents were authorized to select the teachers for the adult classes. Only teachers with valid

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<sup>8</sup>T. H. Harris, "Rules Governing Schools for Adults in Louisiana" (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Department of Education, February 1929), pp. 1-2. (Mimeographed.)

<sup>9</sup>M. S. Robertson, Organization of Classes For Illiterate Adults in Louisiana and Directions For Teachers (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1931), pp. 1-2.

teaching certificates were employed. These teachers were paid at the rate of \$1.50 per lesson for teaching classes with ten to fifteen students in average daily attendance. In classes with an average daily attendance of sixteen or more pupils the teacher pay rate was \$2.00 per lesson. Teachers of Negro classes were paid \$1.00 per lesson for classes of sixteen or more students.<sup>10</sup>

Classes were organized at the discretion of the parish superintendent and continued for that period of time found most profitable for the group enrolled. In general, a class was terminated when most of the adult students had reasonably mastered the material found in the reading textbook and a minimum amount of writing.

With the worsening of the depression and the subsequent further loss of school funds, all aspects of education in Louisiana were threatened with financial disaster. By the end of the 1932-33 school session the organized program for adult academic education once again came to a halt in this state.

## II. FEDERAL EMERGENCY RELIEF EDUCATION, 1934-1943

A detailed study of public school adult academic education in Louisiana under the Federal Relief Administration has been hampered by several factors. First, the broad nature of the curriculum with its overlapping courses, designed to meet the needs of the teacher on

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.



relief, made it difficult to distinguish adult academic instruction from vocational class instruction. Second, most of the official reports regarding Federal Emergency Relief Education in Louisiana were sent to Washington and stored in the National Archives; and consequently they are not available to the researcher. Third, many of the records for this period which belonged to the Louisiana State Department of Education were lost in a fire that destroyed a warehouse in which they were stored.

In spite of the above limitations it has been possible to sketch a general picture of the period from the personal files of individuals who participated in the Federal Emergency Relief Education Program and from records available in several of the parish school board offices. However, further study of this period is needed.

#### Organization and Administration

In the summer of 1934, officials of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and representatives of the Louisiana State Department of Education entered into an agreement whereby the state would sponsor a program of adult education to provide employment for teachers and other educated persons who had teaching potentialities. To carry out the project, the State Department of Education organized a plan of supervision similar to that found in the public schools. A Director of the Emergency Educational Program was appointed by the State Superintendent of Education. He was assigned the responsibility of conducting the program according to the provisions of the agreement

with the federal government. One Negro and five white district supervisors were appointed to assist the State Director.<sup>11</sup>

The Parish Superintendent of Schools, the Parish Director of Relief and the Parish Educational Supervisor were jointly responsible for the initiation and operation of the program at the parish level. The superintendent, in cooperation with the other persons mentioned, determined the communities in which the classes operated, and, in general, was responsible for the success of the program.

The Parish Superintendent and the Parish Director of Relief selected the teachers from those who were eligible for relief work. The eligibility for employment on a relief project was determined by the Parish Director of Relief in accordance with directions supplied by the State Director of Relief. When the Parish Director failed to agree on teaching personnel within the parish, the matter was referred to the State Director of Emergency Education for final selection.<sup>12</sup>

Project applications. Applications for establishing Emergency Educational Projects were prepared by the Parish Superintendent of Schools and the Emergency Relief Administration Supervisor of Social Services in the Parish. The Parish Superintendent signed as sponsor

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<sup>11</sup>M. S. Robertson, Public Education in Louisiana After 1898 (Baton Rouge: Bureau of Educational Materials and Research, Louisiana State University, 1952), pp. 119-120.

<sup>12</sup>Emergency Education Program, Emergency Relief Administration, 85-A (New Orleans: Emergency Relief Administration of Louisiana, 1934), pp. 1-2.

of the project. Individual applications were required for each type of class proposed. The Project Applications that were approved at the parish level were forwarded to the District Engineer. Upon being approved at the district level, they were sent to the State Supervisor of Emergency Education in Baton Rouge. Upon his approval, the Project Applications were forwarded to the Emergency Relief Administration, State Headquarters, for final approval.<sup>13</sup>

Projects were made to cover forty weeks beginning September 15, 1934. Estimates of costs were required for every aspect of the proposed program.<sup>14</sup>

#### Curriculum, Teachers, and Classes

The first Emergency Education Program for Louisiana under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration provided for instruction in the following phases of work:

1. Literacy classes
2. General Adult Education classes
3. Vocational Rehabilitation classes
4. Vocational classes
5. Nursery Schools

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<sup>13</sup>M. S. Robertson, Instructions For Organizing Emergency Education Programs, Emergency Education Program - 6 (Baton Rouge: Division of Emergency Education, State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1937), p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

The Literacy and General Adult Education classes constituted the largest part of the program.<sup>15</sup> Only a few classes were organized for Vocational Rehabilitation and Nursery care.

In order to become certified to teach in the program, a teacher had to be in need and unemployed. He could be on the relief rolls at the time of application, or he would be acceptable if he were eligible for relief. In a bulletin dated September 19, 1934, sent to the Social Service Supervisors in each parish from the Emergency Relief Administration State Headquarters; it was suggested that "a fairly liberal definition of need" be used in certifying teachers for work. "Generally, unemployed teachers who have to earn their own living, and who normally would be employed are eligible." Married women teachers whose husbands were employed were not acceptable, nor persons "who had other means of support and wished to teach to obtain supplemental income."<sup>16</sup>

Any teacher who was qualified to teach in the public schools of the state was eligible for the Adult Schools, provided he met the above relief requirements. Occasionally, well-educated persons who did not hold a teaching certificate were permitted to teach in Adult

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<sup>15</sup>M. S. Robertson, Emergency Education Program for Louisiana, E.E.P.-1 (Baton Rouge: Division of Emergency Education, State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1934), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>Emergency Education Program For Adult Education, Emergency Relief Administration, No. 91 (New Orleans: Emergency Relief Administration of Louisiana, 1934), pp. 1-2.

Classes because of their particular fitness for a certain job.<sup>17</sup>

Teachers of literacy classes were paid at the rate of fifty cents per hour for a maximum of twenty-four hours per week. Teachers of all other classes were paid at the rate of sixty cents per hour for a maximum of twenty-four hours per week.

A principal teacher was employed for every ten regular teachers used. This principal teacher was paid at the rate of seventy-five cents per hour for a maximum of twenty-four hours per week. In addition, he was paid five dollars per week for traveling expenses incurred in the performance of his duties.<sup>18</sup>

Classes varied in size. A teacher was expected to instruct about twenty persons. No teacher was permitted to start work until he had at least ten students in class.

Classrooms were located in public school buildings, community halls, private homes, and other places that were approved by the Parish Superintendent and the State Director of Emergency Education. Reportedly, some of the local school officials were reluctant to make the public school facilities available for adult classes. In Circular No. 366, dated November 13, 1934, Superintendent Harris called attention to the need for close cooperation between the Parish Superintendent

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<sup>17</sup>Robertson, Emergency Education Program for Louisiana, E.E.P.-1, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>18</sup>Emergency Education Program For Adult Education, Emergency Relief Administration, No. 91 (New Orleans: Emergency Relief Administration of Louisiana, 1934), pp. 1-2.

and the Social Service Officer, urging that the public school buildings "be placed at the disposal of teachers for adult classes," and suggesting that "School Boards pay for the extra expenses of lighting, heating, etc."<sup>19</sup> The Board would "be more than repaid for the extra expenditures by improved school support for the Adult Education Program."

#### Discord Over the Federal Emergency Relief Education Program

By the summer of 1935 dissention had developed between officials of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in Louisiana and representatives of the State Department of Education. Following the removal of Dr. M. S. Robertson as Director of the Federal Emergency Relief Education Program without consultation with the State Department of Education, Superintendent Harris withdrew Louisiana's cooperative plan for relief education. This condition prevailed until April, 1936, when the political climate once again changed and the arrangements that existed prior to the rift were renewed. In the meantime the Federal Emergency Relief Administration had been replaced by the Works Progress Administration.

Several other points of friction in the program developed. One of the five white district supervisors requested that the following uncertainties be removed:

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<sup>19</sup> T. H. Harris, "Emergency Education for Adults," Circular No. 366 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1934), p. 2. (Mimeographed.)

1. Organization with reference to authority, duties and responsibilities of every participant in the program
2. Length of Program and Tenure of Position
  - a. The program should have a timetable as a basis for planning the work to be undertaken.
  - b. Teachers should not be subject to removal on the "whims and caprice of arbitrarily acting people in authority. Once a teacher has been selected, she should be permitted to work in peace the length of the program as long as she is successful."<sup>20</sup>

It was suggested further that all report forms and records be devised "with an idea of giving in a simple way the full information desired."

#### Revision of the Federal Emergency Relief Education Program

On May 6, 1935 the Works Progress Administration assumed the responsibilities that were formerly conducted by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. Under this new federal agency adult education activities were continued in Louisiana with some modification. The administration, supervision and scope of the program were defined more clearly by the Works Progress Administration.

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<sup>20</sup>F. K. White, "Suggestions For An Adult Education Program in Louisiana," Office Memo., 1935. (Mimeographed.) No Address given.

Changes in administration and supervision. In September, 1936 a statement on procedures was sent to the Works Progress Administrator for Louisiana by the Washington Office explaining the general policies for operation of the Emergency Education Program.<sup>21</sup> The Works Progress Administration Education Program would be integrated with the programs "of established agencies of public education in the state . . . , to develop activities and values which may permanently accrue to the established program of public education." Further, effort was made "to avoid establishing a separate or competing educational system."

The appointment of the Works Progress Administration state official responsible for the administration of the education program was subject to the approval of the State Superintendent of Education.<sup>22</sup>

As a general policy, supervision of the program was left to the state and local public educational officials. Such supervision was understood to include the fixing of professional qualifications for personnel employed in the program; the determination of whether or not applicants met such qualifications; the approval or disapproval of courses of study; and, the determination of what materials, supplies and equipment were to be requisitioned for the education program.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Harry L. Hopkins, Handbook of Procedures Letter No. 29, Works Progress Administration (Washington: Works Progress Administration, 1936), pp. 1-2.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 5.



Curriculum changes. In November, 1936 the Works Progress Administration listed the activities that were eligible for inclusion in the education program. Among those approved were Literacy and Naturalization classes, Worker's Education, Public Affairs Education, Education for Home and Family Life, Vocational Education, Nursery Schools, and Education in Avocational and Leisure Time Activities.<sup>24</sup>

The classes for Literacy and Naturalization and for Worker's Education were primarily academic in nature and are treated more in detail herewith because of their similarity to courses offered in adult education before and after the depression.

Eligible persons were assigned to organize and teach classes for those adults who were unable to read and write in English "with sufficient facility." Instructions were given in reading and writing of English, and in other phases of elementary general education as the members of the group needed. Effort was made to correlate literacy education closely with other phases of the education program. Whenever possible the content provided elementary instruction in health, home-making, worker's education, and public affairs.<sup>25</sup>

Classes were organized for all foreign-born adults who wished to prepare for the steps necessary to become American citizens. Special stress was placed on fulfilling the requirements for citizenship as

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<sup>24</sup>Harry L. Hopkins, Handbook of Procedures Letter No. 29, Supplement No. 1, Works Progress Administration (Washington: Works Progress Administration, 1936), pp. 1 ff.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

prescribed by law. However, effort was exerted also to give the students a better understanding of the full responsibilities of citizenship and the problems attendant thereto.

Classes were organized for workers, both urban and rural, who desired to participate in courses that dealt with the social and economic sciences, history, the humanities, and the applied arts. Special emphasis was placed on group discussions of the basic social and economic principles related to the experiences and problems of the immediate community, the state and the nation. Other classes offered such subjects as English and literature, public speaking and dramatics, science, parliamentary law, and art.<sup>26</sup>

The revised Works Progress Administration Education Program permitted greater flexibility in state and local planning. Effort was made to adapt the program to fit the needs and conditions that existed in the immediate communities. State and local public educational leaders were given a wider role in supervision of the program. By this action it was hoped that they would be encouraged to maintain maximum initiative and responsibility for the success of the program. The curriculum was broadened to meet practically any need that arose. While this action opened the door of opportunity for many persons, it had the negative effect of causing a shortage of available teachers for the literacy classes. In order to cope with this situation, the

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-4.

State Department of Education planned a course of action.<sup>27</sup>

#### Renewed Drive Against Illiteracy

During the early years of the depression the people of Louisiana devoted their full energy and effort toward securing the basic material needs of life. At this time, little value appeared in seeking further academic enrichment. The advent of the federal educational program as a measure of relief for teachers had the effect of continued deemphasis on the need for immediate literacy education. To fill this void and resume the attack on Louisiana's high illiteracy rate, the State Department of Education launched a program to organize an increased number of literacy classes.

Pilot program. Three demonstration projects for adult literacy teaching were organized in 1937, financed and operated by the State Department of Education, the Works Progress Administration, and the local school boards. The demonstration classes were conducted in Tensas, Lafayette, and Terrebonne Parishes. The Works Progress Administration supplied as many persons as were available from the ranks of unemployed teachers on relief. Additional teachers were supplied by the State Department of Education through the parish school boards.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>M. S. Robertson, "Future Outlook for Adult Education in Louisiana," The Louisiana Colored Teachers' Journal, XI, No. 3 (December-January, 1937-1938), 12.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

The purpose of the pilot programs was to help determine how much money and effort were needed to organize and operate classes for all illiterates in the state with the hope of "completely eliminating illiteracy from Louisiana in a period of two or three years." Then it was "Superintendent Harris's plan to seek the money with which to turn the deal and rid the state of illiteracy before 1940."<sup>29</sup>

Referring to the plan, the Times Picayune published an editorial entitled "Making War on Illiteracy" stating that "only teamwork between State and National Government and a carefully devised plan will bring about the desired improvement in three years or less."<sup>30</sup>

Launching the campaign. On the basis of the findings which resulted from the demonstration projects, a new state-wide literacy campaign was started in the fall of 1938. Parish superintendents were urged to employ regular public school teachers to teach adult illiterates two or three nights weekly. However, Works Progress Administration certified teachers were used in the program when available. A sixty-lesson course was offered and it was to be completed in approximately seven and one-half months.

Under this arrangement white teachers were paid sixteen to twenty dollars monthly. Negro teachers received eight to ten dollars

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Times Picayune, October 31, 1937.

per month.<sup>31</sup>

In some of the parishes the superintendents found it advisable to use unemployed teachers in the communities. These teachers worked five to six hours a day either in promoting the organization of classes or in teaching. For these duties the white teachers were paid from fifty to sixty dollars per month, and the Negro teachers received from thirty-five to forty-five dollars per month.<sup>32</sup>

Superintendent Harris commented on the new literacy drive in his report for the 1937-38 school session. He noted that a "comprehensive program for the reduction of adult illiteracy has been under way in the state . . . and intensified during the past two years." The Works Progress Administration had furnished some teachers in each parish, and, "with the exception of the salary of the Director, had taken care of overhead and supervisory expenses." These efforts by the Works Progress Administration "are supplemented by various Parish School Boards."<sup>33</sup>

In a closing statement, Superintendent Harris mentioned that "many thousands of adult illiterates of both white and Negro are being reached, and it is hoped and believed that the Federal Census of 1940

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<sup>31</sup>M. S. Robertson, Suggested Forms for Literacy Classes in Louisiana, Division of Education, Works Progress Administration (New Orleans: Works Progress Administration, 1938), pp. 1-2.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Eighty-Ninth Annual Report for the Session 1937-38, Bulletin No. 402 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1939), p. 14.

will indicate a very noticeable reduction of illiteracy figures."

### End of An Era

The Works Progress Administration Education Program continued operation in Louisiana until 1943. However, its academic appeal had been on the decline before that time. The Ninety-Fourth Annual Report for the Session 1942-43 officially recognized the end of Federal Emergency Relief Education in Louisiana. "Adult education as a separate program in the state, did not receive a major amount of attention during the year. Early in 1943 the program was discontinued because of the liquidation of the Works Progress Administration." Lack of personnel had reduced the program to a "comparatively small effort" before February 1, 1943.

This final note in the Report is of interest:

The results of this joint adult education program will go down in history as a worthy one in Louisiana because during the operation of this program many thousands of adults were given valuable instruction and hundreds of people, who otherwise would have been without work, were given useful employment in helping to improve the education status in Louisiana.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, another phase of Louisiana's effort to improve the adult literacy level came to a stop. From 1943 to 1949 the people of Louisiana were engaged in the activities stimulated by World War II and

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<sup>34</sup>Ninety-Fourth Annual Report for the Session 1942-43, Bulletin No. 518 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1944), pp. 78-79.

the subsequent problems of readjustment to a peace-time routine.

During this period the program of public school adult academic education was inactive.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MODERN PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT ACADEMIC EDUCATION PROGRAM IN OPERATION, 1950-1963

The modern Public School Adult Academic Education Program in Louisiana was started in 1950. The limitation of funds for the program during the first two years restricted its operation to a few classes, but by 1953 the annual appropriation was increased to \$100,000 permitting statewide extension of the program.

To gain a more accurate picture of adult education since World War II, mention must be made about the operation of the Veterans Education Program. Although this program was not open to the general public, it served as a vital bridge in the establishment of the state post-war education program for all needy adults.

#### I. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF VETERANS EDUCATION

The Veterans Education Program was administered by the State Department of Education and the parish and city school systems throughout the state. At the state level, a Director of Veterans Education was appointed and a staff of supervisors and other assistants were assigned to work with him. In the parishes either a special supervisor of Veterans Education was employed or the duty devolved upon one of the regular school supervisors.



### Reimbursement Plan

The Veterans Administration reimbursed the State Department of Education for the costs of the Veterans Program on the following basis:

First, the actual cost of teaching was used as a base. This included the salary of the regular teacher at the rate of \$3.00 per clock hour of actual classroom teaching, and the salary of the itinerant teacher on the basis of \$6.00 per hour. Teachers had to maintain an average of twelve students, not less than eight or more than sixteen. The itinerant teacher had to work at the rate of one hour for each ten clock hours worked by the regular teachers.

Second, there was an administrative cost of fifteen per cent of the actual cost as reported in the above teacher pay. The administrative allowance was divided on the basis of sixty per cent to the parish and forty per cent to the state. The parish was reimbursed on an actual cost basis for books and consumable supplies furnished to veterans, and ten per cent was allowed for the handling costs of such books and supplies.

Lastly, the parishes were reimbursed monthly for the actual salaries paid to the teachers and itinerant teachers in accordance with the approved salary plan.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Shelby M. Jackson, Louisiana Adult Education Program (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1949), pp. 1-2.

### Class Organization and Teaching Personnel

Veterans classes were conducted in public school buildings and other places designated by the State Department of Education. No class was permitted to operate later than 9:30 P. M. Twenty-four class hours per week constituted a full-time attendance. Some students enrolled for three-fourths time or eighteen hours per week of attendance while others registered for one-half time, twelve hours, or one-fourth time, six hours of attendance.

Students were grouped according to ability and progress was determined by standardized achievement tests. They were offered two courses:

- (1) Adult Elementary
- (2) Adult Specialized Education

The Elementary Course required a maximum of twenty-four months of full-time attendance. Teachers who taught in Adult Elementary Courses were required to have a regular teaching certificate. They were appointed to their positions by the Parish Superintendent.

Teachers of Adult Specialized Education were selected from the best qualified people who were available and were approved by the State Department of Education before gaining employment.

No regularly employed full-time teacher could teach more than thirteen hours per week in the veteran program. It was recommended that no more than two hours of instruction per school day be permitted.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-4.

There was close cooperation between the Veterans Administration and the State Department of Education in the conduct of the program. Many of the techniques and procedures utilized in the Veterans Education Program were later incorporated into the state sponsored Adult Education Program. The influence which resulted from providing adult veterans an opportunity to continue their education helped stimulate the need and desire for further education for others.

## II. ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE NEW STATE

### PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT ACADEMIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

The modern Public School Adult Academic Education Program for non-veterans was established by Act No. 252 of the 1950 Legislature. Notwithstanding the claims of zealous supporters who insisted that this legislation created the first organized adult education program in Louisiana, it was evident that with the passage of this law, the opportunity for continued schooling for mature students had become a facet in the total educational picture of this state.

Under the new plan, parish and city school boards were authorized to organize and administer a program of adult academic education. The State Department of Education was charged with the administrative responsibility on a statewide basis.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Handbook on Adult Academic Education, Designed as a Guide for Superintendents, Supervisors, Principals and Teachers of Adults in Academic Education (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1953), p. 1.

In order to carry out the purpose of Act 252, four plans for organizing adult classes were suggested:

1. Classes could be established for teaching in the basic subjects of reading, writing, and number work.
2. Classes could be organized to teach adults who dropped out of school in the upper elementary grades and who wished to upgrade themselves educationally.
3. Classes could be organized for mature students who dropped out before graduation from high school. These students would have the opportunity to upgrade themselves to the point at which they could secure a high school equivalency certificate, or a regular high school diploma.
4. Other classes could be organized for the various fields of cultural, vocational and academic needs in order that adults might acquire skills for new occupations, or acquire further skills in their present work.

Certain conditions governed the establishment of classes. Official approval for the operation of any class was required by the State Department of Education. Records had to be kept concerning the operation of the various adult educational programs that were made possible by Act 252.

The parish superintendent was authorized to select the teachers and recruit students for participation in the program. He was urged to limit the reimbursement claims for the parish due to the limitation of funds. However, if some parishes failed to set up an adult program,

funds were reallocated to those parishes that organized additional classes.<sup>4</sup>

#### Local Class Promotion and Organization

The persons responsible for the program in each community were instructed to contact personally all adults who were prospective students. Through an explanation of the program it was believed that an interest would be created for participation in one of the four class plans.

Agencies and leaders of the community were contacted and the program was explained to them in the hope that further interest could be stimulated among the needy adults.

After informing the adult population, nineteen years of age and over, about the purposes and the opportunities available in the Adult Education Program, an organizational or enrollment date was set. Many devices were employed to insure a large attendance. Door to door calls were made, announcements by newspaper, radio, television, church groups, Parent Teacher Associations, and notices were sent home by school children to inform the community of the meeting.

At the meeting, detailed information was given regarding the need for more education, the monetary values involved, and the social and cultural benefits that accrued to one who attained a higher educational level. An explanation was made of the manner in which the

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

classes were conducted. The prospective student was told that no one could fail any of the achievement tests. Individual instruction was offered, and a student progressed as fast as his capabilities permitted.<sup>5</sup>

A minimum of fifteen and a maximum of not more than twenty adult students were required to be enrolled for each class. Those in excess of the number permitted for any one class were placed on a waiting list. If an opening occurred in a class because of a drop-out, the person at the top of the waiting list was contacted and offered a place in the class. If the number on the waiting list were large enough, a second class was organized upon the approval of the school principal and the parish supervisor.

Supervision and local promotion. The parish school board was responsible for providing adequate supervision of the Adult Education Program. It could delegate one of its existing supervisors to give the program the necessary promotion and supervisory and administrative functions. An individual might be employed on a part-time basis to supervise the program, or a full-time supervisor could be utilized for adult classes if the program in the parish were large enough to justify it. On the other hand, the supervisor was given the responsibility for promoting and helping to organize adult classes in those

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<sup>5</sup>"An Explanation of the Various Phases, Step-By-Step, of the Adult Academic Education Program," Memo. No. 9 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1961), pp. 1-2. (Mimeographed.)

areas where the program was weak.<sup>6</sup>

### Testing and Student Placement

Achievement testing played a major role in the Adult Education Program. A test was administered to each student at the first meeting of the class in order to place him in the proper category with relation to the fundamental skills in reading, arithmetic and language. Proficiency in these basic skill subjects was considered more important than any other subject taught.

Leaders in adult education claimed that the initial test enabled the teacher to make adequate plans for securing the books necessary to challenge the adult student on his individual level. The student's weaknesses were detected and plans were made to offer corrective instruction. By early testing, many hours were saved in determining the student's achievement level.

The student's class application revealed his approximate grade level, and this served as a guide for the teacher in selecting the proper test. The achievement form of testing was used because one of the main purposes of the academic classes was the improvement of fundamental skills. Most parishes used the California Achievement Test. This instrument measured reading comprehension, vocabulary, arithmetic reasoning, arithmetic fundamentals, mechanics of grammar and spelling. Four levels of the test were used: the Primary for grades one through

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<sup>6</sup>Plan of Operation for Adult Education Program (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1962), p. 3.

three; the Elementary for grades four, five and six; the Intermediate for grades seven, eight and nine; and, the Advanced form for grades ten through fifteen.<sup>7</sup>

Before the tests were administered the students were told the reasons for the testing program, and that the results would not determine their passing or failing. Stress was placed on the need for determining a starting point before planning the individual student's educational upgrading. Special effort was made by the administrator of the test to insure that each student understood the directions for taking the test.

Re-testing. Students enrolled in the adult classes were re-tested at least once during the school year. Ordinarily this was done near the end of the term. However, for those adult students who had been in the program for more than a year, only one test was given for the entire session, provided they were tested at the end of the preceding school term. All new students in the program were tested at least twice during the first year. One test was given upon entry in the program for placement and diagnostic purposes. The second test was given near the end of the term to all students who were enrolled at that time.

Additional tests were given at the discretion of the teacher. On occasions the re-test was used as a motivating device for a student

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<sup>7</sup>Shelby M. Jackson, Handbook on Adult Academic Education, Bulletin No. 795, Revised (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1960), pp. 1-2.



who felt that his progress was too slow. When a new student fell just below the required ninth grade level for entering high school preparation, he was re-tested at any time the teacher felt the necessary progress was made for attaining the higher level. This permitted students to begin the ninety clock-hours or more of high school work preparatory to taking the General Educational Development Test.<sup>8</sup>

#### Materials and Methods of Instruction

The teacher and supervisor carefully studied the results obtained from the placement test for each student. Grade levels and individual weaknesses were used as a basis for ordering the worktexts and other materials. When the number and kinds of worktexts needed for the class were determined, two methods were available for purchasing them. First, the parish superintendent or supervisor made the order for all the classes in the parish and maintained a central stockroom from which these materials were available. The student paid the teacher, and at the end of the month these funds were used to reimburse the parish. Under the other method, the teacher collected the money from the students and ordered the materials directly from the publishing company.

The State Department of Education issued a recommended list for workbooks, worktexts, and supplemental and reference materials for

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-5.

use in the Adult Academic Educational Program in Louisiana.<sup>9</sup> In part, the list contained the following:

<u>READING</u>		
<u>GRADE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PUBLISHER</u>
1 - 2	I WANT TO READ AND WRITE (one issue)	The Steck Company
3	HOW TO READ BETTER (one workbook for each grade)	The Steck Company
4 - 12	READING FOR MEANING (one workbook for each grade)	J. B. Lippincott Company

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS FOR READING

Primary	Complete Set Science	Row, Peterson and
1, 2, & 3	Series	Company
Intermediate	Complete Set Science	Row, Peterson and
4, 5 & 6	Series	Company
Junior	Complete Set Science	Row, Peterson and
7, 8 & 9	Series	Company
All Grades	Readers Digest	
3 - 12	S-R-A Reading for Under- standing (Kit)	Science Research Associates

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<sup>9</sup>C. C. Couvillion, "Recommended Workbooks, Supplemental and Reference Materials for Adult Academic Education in Louisiana" (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1962), pp. 1-3. (Mimeographed.)

MATHEMATICS

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PUBLISHER</u>
1 - 8	WORKING WITH NUMBERS (1 workbook for each grade)	The Steck Company
9 & 10	REFRESHER and/or	The Steck Company
	MODERN PRACTICE	The Steck Company
11 & 12	ALGEBRA - BOOK Revised or	The Steck Company
	REFRESHER WORKBOOK IN ARITHMETIC	Allyn and Bacon, Incorporated

LANGUAGE

1	LEARN TO TALK & WRITE BOOK I	The Steck Company
2	TALKING & WRITING - BOOK 2	The Steck Company
3	OUR LANGUAGE	The Steck Company
4 - 8	LANGUAGE (1 workbook for each grade)	The Steck Company
9	KEYS TO ENGLISH MASTERY - Freshman Year or	The Economy Com- pany
	MASTERING LANGUAGE RULES	The Steck Company

GRADE	TITLE	PUBLISHER
10	KEYS TO ENGLISH MASTERY - Sophomore Year or IMPROVING EXPRESSION	The Economy Com- pany The Steck Company
11	KEYS TO ENGLISH MASTERY - Junior Year or PERFECTING EXPRESSION	The Economy Com- pany The Steck Company
12	KEYS TO ENGLISH MASTERY - Senior year or REFINING EXPRESSION	The Economy Com- pany The Steck Company

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE

PLAIN ENGLISH Handbook	McCormick-Mathers Publishing Company, Incorporated
The Economy Company	McCormick-Mathers Publishing Company, Incorporated
Box 1805	Wichita, Kansas
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	

## SPELLING

GRADE	TITLE	PUBLISHER
2 thru 8	BASIC KEYS TO SPELLING	
	(one work book for each grade)	J. B. Lippincott Company
	or	
	MY WORD BOOK	
9 thru 12	(One workbook for each grade)	Lyons and Carnahan
	Underlined words in each unit of READING FOR MEAN-	
	ING workbook	J. B. Lippincott Company
	and/or	
	PLAIN ENGLISH Handbook	
	pages 140-143	McCormick-Mathers Publishing Company

Teachers were alerted to the dangers of selecting lesson material that was too difficult for the adult student. It was feared that he would become discouraged and drop out of the program. The goal was to keep the student interested long enough for him to realize his own needs. Through good teaching and careful guidance, it was believed that the student would quickly learn the value of the basic subjects to his further educational development.

For illiterates, the materials used were very elementary and pertained to conditions and experiences common to adult life. The

simple elements of reading, writing and arithmetic were undertaken.

Materials for the upper elementary and high school classes were chosen with particular emphasis on the following goals: (1) to correct weaknesses in the fundamental skills, (2) to satisfy specific needs and desires, and (3) to teach new material of special interest.<sup>10</sup>

In all classes teachers attempted to relate the materials to fit the immediate needs of each student. The social studies in particular were interwoven with the everyday events in a fusion type curriculum which eliminated subject area distinctions.

Individual instruction was a basic principle in the teaching of adult students. The needs and desires of the individual represented the ultimate goal of the program. The student proceeded at his own rate of acceleration and was not in competition with anyone else. His individual progress hinged mainly on three factors:

- (1) inherent abilities, (2) intenseness of interest and desire, and
- (3) amount of time available for outside study.

Group instruction was provided whenever the motivation and experiences of the class justified it. This procedure was more effective when the students possessed a reasonable proficiency in the fundamental academic skills. Group work was planned and designed to involve the thinking of the entire class. Effort was made to have every student contribute to the discussion.

The educational leaders of the program were of the opinion that

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<sup>10</sup>Jackson, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

"At the close of each session, the student should be able to leave satisfied. . . that he has learned something new and interesting today which he can use."<sup>11</sup>

Hours of instruction. For more than ten years adult classes were organized for one hundred and twenty hours of instruction according to any of the following plans:

1. Two meetings of three hours length each week for twenty weeks
2. Two meetings of two hours and thirty minutes length each week for twenty-four weeks
3. Two meetings of two hours length each week for thirty weeks
4. Two meetings of one hour and thirty minutes length each week for forty weeks
5. One meeting of three hours length each week for forty weeks

In 1962, the State Department of Education changed the required number of hours for instruction to one hundred and thirty-two. Two meetings of three hours length each week for twenty-two weeks were prescribed in the new schedule.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Handbook on Adult Academic Education, Designed as a Guide for Superintendents, Supervisors, Principals and Teachers of Adults in Academic Education (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1953), p. 10.

<sup>12</sup>Plan of Operation for Adult Education Program, Elementary and Secondary Level (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1962), p. 1.

### Issuance of Certificates

The State Department of Education provided certificates for those students who made satisfactory progress and attained a designated grade level. Following ninety hours of instruction at any grade level, the standardized achievement test was given. Students enrolled in grades one through eleven were awarded achievement certificates denoting the level completed. Students completing a short course or related academic subjects were given an appropriate certificate.

Students who had reached high school level were required to attend class a minimum of ninety clock hours in order to become eligible to take the General Education Development Test. This test served as a final examination for the high school equivalency certificate.

Planning for the General Educational Development Test. When the student began the ninety-hour period of instruction required on the high school level, certain records were collected and brought up to date. The attendance and academic records from schools in which the adult student had enrolled previously were placed on file in the office of the principal who would issue the high school equivalency certificate. It was the responsibility of the student to arrange the forwarding of records from other schools.

Upon completion of the minimum ninety clock-hours of attendance at the high school level the student was given another standardized test. If he scored an average of 13.0 or more grade level with no area less



than 12.0, the teacher certified the results and forwarded them to the principal. The principal gave his official approval to the information and sent it to the parish superintendent.

The State Director of High Schools received the certified report from the parish superintendent, along with a request that the student involved be given the G. E. D. test at the nearest testing center. If all requirements were in order, the state director authorized the testing center to administer the test. Copies of this letter of authorization were sent to the parish superintendent, school principal, and the student to be tested.

The principal informed the student of the exact time of the test and explained that the student would pay the cost of it at the testing center. Every effort was made to encourage the student to take the test after the testing center was authorized to administer it.

The results of the General Education Development Test were sent to the State Director of High Schools by the testing center. After recording the necessary data, the state director forwarded the test results to the high school principal, along with a request for a transcript of the student's credits earned before entering the adult education program.

If the student scored high enough on the General Education Development Test, and upon receipt of his transcript from the high school principal, the State Director of High Schools sent a certificate of high school equivalency to the principal. Generally the

principal presented the equivalency certificate to the adult student at a specially arranged program.

When a student failed the General Education Development Test, he was encouraged to continue in school until the deficiencies were removed. After six months had elapsed, he could go directly to the same testing center that was authorized to administer the original test.<sup>13</sup>

#### Teacher Qualification and Rate of Pay

Teachers employed in the Adult Education Program were required to have a valid Louisiana teaching certificate. In addition, it was desirable for them to have had broad training and experience in working with adult-related activities. It was felt that such persons would be able to serve better the great variety of interests and needs found in the adult classes.

Certain personal qualities were considered important for the teacher of adult students. Sincerity, interest, and a desire to serve people, as well as a willingness to work extra hours when necessary were attributes looked for in the teacher. Integrity, initiative and leadership were important. The program needed persons with understanding and patience for handling each student's problem. The long range objectives of adult education involved more than academic

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<sup>13</sup>"Procedures For the Issuance of High School Equivalency Diplomas," Memo. No. 8 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1961), pp. 1-2. (Mimeographed.)

instruction. Frequently, the teacher's personal characteristics had more influence on the class than his teaching efforts.

The rate of pay for teachers during the early years of the program was \$3.25 per clock hour of instruction. This schedule prevailed only for those classes which maintained a monthly attendance average of no less than twelve hours of actual student attendance for each hour of instruction. For any given month that the class failed to maintain the above attendance ratio, the teacher pay was reduced proportionately. In classes where the average monthly student attendance was from 11.0 to 11.9 for each hour of instruction, the teacher was paid \$3.00 per hour. This was reduced to \$2.75 per instruction hour when the attendance dropped to an average of 10.0 to 10.9, and to \$2.50 for an average of 9.0 to 9.9 in attendance. When the ratio of attendance hours to teacher hours fell from 7.9 to 7.0, the teacher received \$2.00 per hour. Any class that had a ratio below 7.0 was closed.<sup>14</sup>

By 1960 the pay rate for teachers was increased to a maximum of \$3.75 per clock hour of instruction. To receive this pay the teacher had to maintain a minimum monthly class attendance average of 15.0 hours of actual student attendance for each hour of instruction. When the student attendance fell below the minimum requirements,

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<sup>14</sup>Shelby M. Jackson, Handbook On Adult Academic Education, Bulletin No. 795 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1954), p. 13.

the teacher's pay was reduced approximately twenty-five cents per hour for each student hour of attendance less than the minimum. Classes were discontinued when the ratio between student hours and teaching hours fell below 7.0.<sup>15</sup>

#### Allocation of State Funds and Rate of Reimbursement

The State Superintendent of Education made the allocation of funds to the parish and city school systems for the support of the Adult Education Program. The distribution was made on the basis of what the state superintendent considered to be the best interest of the program.<sup>16</sup>

Throughout the years in which the program operated, limited state funds made it impossible to support a comprehensive program. However, each parish and city system was expected to conduct at least a few classes in elementary and secondary education for adults and research and experimentation activities were encouraged at the local level.

Originally the rate of reimbursement to the parish and city school boards by the State Department of Education for the program of adult education was \$3.25 per clock-hour of instruction. The maximum amount allotted per course of 120 hours was \$390.00. These reimbursements

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<sup>15</sup>Shelby M. Jackson, Handbook On Adult Academic Education, Bulletin 795, Revised (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1960), p. 14.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

were made semiannually.

By 1960, the rate of reimbursement was increased to \$3.75 per clock-hour of instruction. The total cost of the new 132 hour course was kept at a maximum of \$450.00.<sup>17</sup>

### III. PROGRESS OF THE MODERN PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT ACADEMIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

An examination of the Annual Evaluation Reports in Adult Education that were submitted to the State Department of Education by the parish school systems indicate that a reasonably sustained progression had occurred in the scope and effectiveness of the Public School Adult Academic Education Program. Special studies have been made which partly collaborated the findings of these reports.<sup>18</sup>

The increase in state appropriations for support of the Adult Academic Education Program was basic to any probable growth. Starting with a limited grant of \$25,000 in 1950, the appropriation reached \$250,000 in 1957, and \$350,000 by 1960. In 1962, funds designated for adult academic education were reduced to \$250,000.<sup>19</sup> This reduction

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<sup>17</sup>Plan of Operation for Adult Education Program, loc. cit.

<sup>18</sup>J. Berton Gremillion and Norman H. Edwards, Unlimited Horizons Through Adult Academic Education, Bulletin No. 1002 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1962), p. 11.

<sup>19</sup>All appropriation figures were obtained from the Office of the Director of Adult Education, State Department of Education.

was in part the result of an austere fiscal policy advocated by the political leaders of the state government.<sup>20</sup>

The number of parishes providing adult education classes and the total student enrollment increased markedly during the decade from 1950 to 1960. In the two-year period, 1950-1952, less than a dozen of the parish systems offered adult classes. The enrollment for this period was approximately three thousand students. By the summer of 1953, there were thirty-six parishes and one city system offering adult classes. Student enrollment had increased to more than six thousand.

In February, 1955, A. Larriviere, Executive Assistant and Coordinator of Adult Education, reported that fifty-four parishes were participating in the adult program.<sup>21</sup> There were 630 classes enrolling 12,124 adult students. Seventy-eight per cent of these students were below age fifty.

Student enrollment decreased to 6,300 by June, 1957. According to State Superintendent Jackson this loss in enrollment resulted from the lack of adequate funds to meet the needs of the adult student.<sup>22</sup> During the 1957-58 session the enrollment rose to 11,500

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<sup>20</sup>Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, Louisiana Finance Handbook (Baton Rouge: Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, 1962), pp. 4-6.

<sup>21</sup>Letter to Teachers of Adult Education, February 4, 1955.

<sup>22</sup>Letter to Parish and City Superintendents, June 19, 1957.

students. By 1961-62 it had climbed to 13,436 students, with adult classes in fifty-nine parishes. Figure 8 shows the distribution of the 1961-62 enrollment by parishes.

Information obtained from the Office of the State Director of Adult Education disclosed that more than 100,000 adults had participated in the program since its inception. An annual average of 750 adult illiterates learned to read and write. By July, 1963, the cumulative number of high school equivalency certificates issued had reached 9,727. Figure 9 gives the cumulative number of graduates from the adult education program in each parish.

Gremillion and Edwards conducted a study to evaluate the adult academic education program in three different school systems that were considered "representative of a cross-section of Louisiana".<sup>23</sup> A total of 317 adult graduates participated in the study. This number represented nearly sixty-seven per cent of all the adult graduates contacted in the three-parish survey.

Certain conclusions of the foregoing study are pertinent:

First, a large number of the adult graduates stated that participation in the academic education program served as a strong influence in keeping their own children in school.

Second, many of the adults were unemployed while enrolled in the academic education classes. Among those who were employed during

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<sup>23</sup>Gremillion and Edwards, op. cit., p. 1.

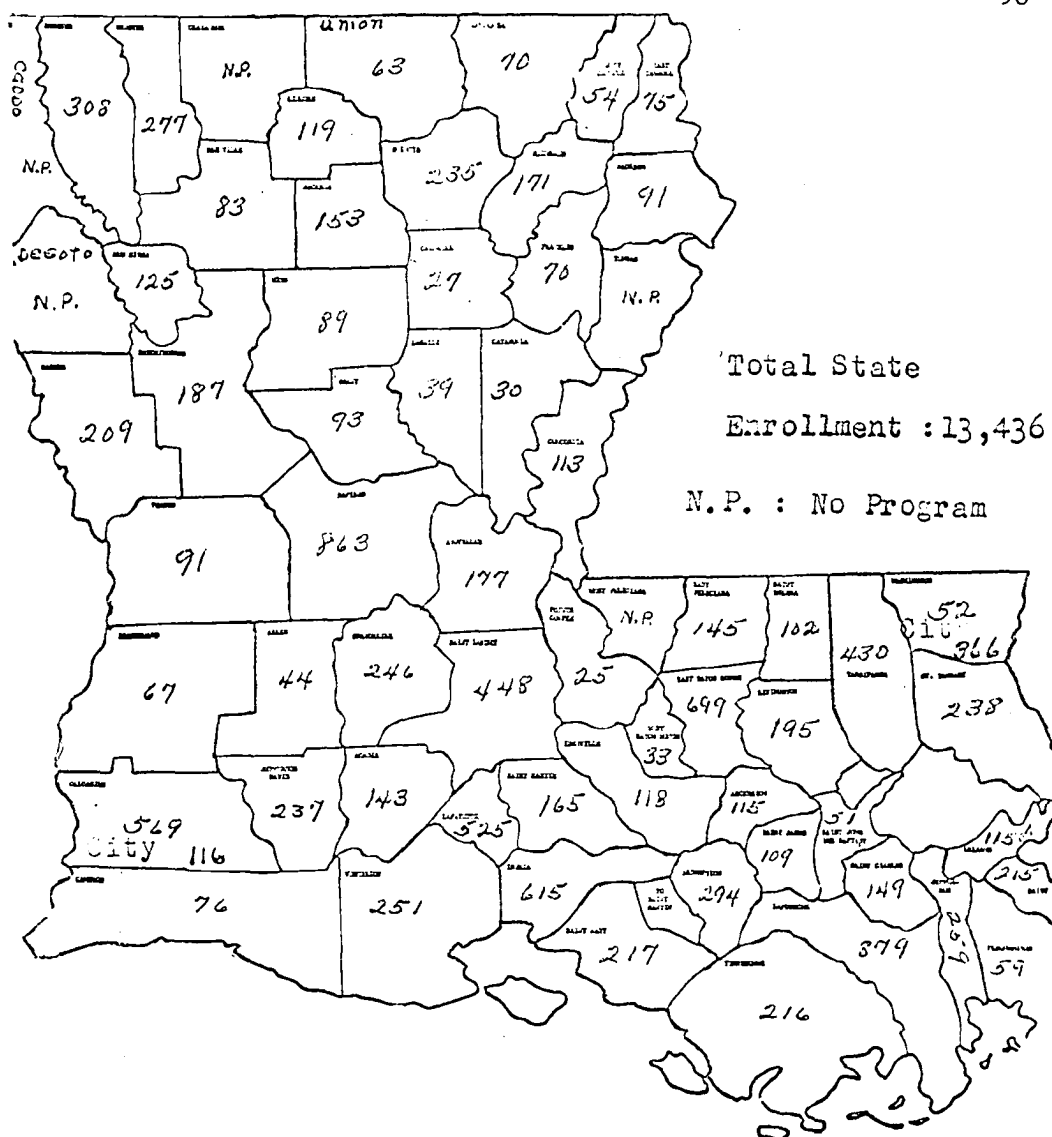


FIGURE 8

TOTAL ENROLLMENT OF ADULT STUDENTS  
IN ALL CLASSES, BY PARISHES  
1961-62



CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF GRADUATES FROM ADULT ACADEMIC  
HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS, BY PARISHES  
1954 TO 1963

the time of enrollment, a small percentage had jobs which required a high school education. Following their graduation from the academic program, a considerable number of the adults reported that they held positions which required at least a high school education.

Third, the annual mean income of the adult graduates had increased by seven to eight hundred dollars primarily as a result of their improved educational status.

Fourth, general benefits derived by the adult graduates included employment security, promotion in employment, qualification for enrollment in institutions of higher education, and a greater sense of social and civic responsibility.

The findings of this study reflected favorably on the effectiveness of the high school segment of the adult academic education program.

A study by Shipp revealed some relevant facts regarding the progress in educational attainment by Louisiana adults.<sup>24</sup> In an analysis of reports by the United States Bureau of Census for 1960, it was singled out that "Since only adults twenty-five years old and over were included, it may be noted that the youngest adults began school some 19 years prior to the census." From this perspective, it was evident that "Most of the adults in the 1960 census had completed their formal schooling one or more decades prior to 1960."

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<sup>24</sup>Donald E. Shipp, "Census Data on the Educational Attainment of Adults," Louisiana Schools, XL, No. 4 (December, 1962), 8.

Therefore, the standard of adult education in 1960 "may reflect the cumulative educational practices during the 1940's, the 1930's, and earlier decades."

Shipp stated that the 1960 census reported 348,795 adults, twenty-five years of age and older, in Louisiana with less than five years of school. This was contrasted to the enrollment of only 10,371 adults in all classes of the adult academic education program in 1960-61.

The study was concluded with the following observation:

First, although Louisiana ranked low in the educational attainment of its adults, it had made substantial progress in improving these levels in recent years.

Second, to improve the educational rank of Louisiana, the "Compulsory school attendance must be enforced, the drop-out rate must be lowered," and it was stated that a "crash program of adult education must be started which will encourage illiterate adults to raise their educational level."<sup>25</sup>

In 1961, the Annual Report stated that the Adult Education Program over the state as a whole "resulted in extraordinary success in quality of achievement as well as numbers reached."<sup>26</sup> There were 5,295 white adult students in the program who upgraded their individual

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>One Hundred Twelfth Annual Report for the Session 1960-61, Bulletin No. 953 (Baton Rouge: State Department of Education of Louisiana, 1961), pp. 99-100.

academic training on an average of two and three-tenths grades for the year. The Negro students numbered 5,076, and had upgraded their individual academic training on an average of one and three tenths for the term.

This source further disclosed that 845 students learned to read and write, 647 elevated their level of schooling from lower elementary to upper elementary, and 1,004 moved from upper elementary to high school.

The census reports revealed some interesting statistics regarding the educational progress among adults in Louisiana.<sup>27</sup> In 1940, the median education for all Louisiana adults twenty-five years of age and over was six and six-tenths. In 1950, the median was seven and six-tenths, and in 1960 it was eight and eight-tenths. The influence of the Public School Adult Academic Education Program in producing this change is difficult, if not impossible, to measure.

The extent of progress made by the Modern Adult Education Program became a debatable question. Leaders of the movement acclaimed its accomplishments and asked for more funds to extend its effectiveness. Others were concerned because the program had enrolled only a small number of the multitude of functional illiterates in Louisiana.

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<sup>27</sup>United States Bureau of the Census. U. S. Census of Population: 1960. General Social and Economic Characteristics, Louisiana. Final Report P C (1) - 20C (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1961), pp. 20-121.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A study has been made of Public School Adult Academic Education in Louisiana in order to provide a valid account of the origin, development, and growth of this institution. Special consideration has been given to the influence of the historical background, the problems encountered, and the progress made in this movement.

#### I. SUMMARY

An examination of reference materials regarding the purpose of this study revealed that very little attention was given in the past to the compilation of a cumulative record pertaining to public school adult academic education in Louisiana. Secondary accounts dealing with early adult educational activities in Louisiana were practically non-existent.

An analysis and interpretation of the data collected indicated that Louisiana entered the second decade of the twentieth century with a legacy of low educational attainment and poor economic conditions among many of its adult citizens. The immediate past had been difficult for the vast majority of the people, both white and Negro. The times demanded a total family effort to gain the basic needs of life, and many children were forced by circumstances to help enhance the family income. Formal education had little to offer in meeting the practical problem of the period.

Many prominent citizens of the times, who knew the value of an education and enjoyed the benefit therefrom, opposed the payment of taxes to provide educational facilities for teaching the children of other people. Others obstructed the expansion of school facilities because of general opposition to public education. As a result of these attitudes and practices thousands of Louisianaians reached adulthood with very limited or no formal education.

Leading educators of the state throughout the years were aware of the seriousness of the illiteracy problem among adults. Campaigns were launched in an effort to improve the educational status of Louisiana. However, the depression of the 1930's and World War II interrupted the programs and shifted the main interest of Louisiana citizens to meeting the emergency at hand.

The failure of some parents to enroll their children in any school for several years and the high drop-out rate among others who had enrolled further complicated the total educational problem.

Following World War II the Louisiana legislature approved a bill which provided for the establishment of public school adult academic classes on the elementary and secondary levels. Leaders in adult education maintained that the appropriations for the program were insufficient to meet the needs of many adult students. Critics of the program pointed out that only a small fraction of the adults in need of further education had participated in the program.

United States Census Reports showed that Louisiana had reduced its per cent of illiteracy among adults, 25 years of age and over,

from 35.7 in 1940 to 21.3 by 1960. The median for the same age group was raised from 6.6 in 1940 to 8.8 in 1960. However, the educational attainment level was still not high. As of 1960, Louisiana had 348,795 functional illiterates among its adults 25 years of age and over, and 67.6 per cent of this age group had not finished high school.

## II. CONCLUSION

Evidence observed in this study supports the following generalizations:

1. Louisiana has a serious problem of low educational attainment among many of its adult citizens.
2. Public school officials have made a strenuous effort to alert the people and political leaders of Louisiana to the importance of taking action to overcome the problem.
3. Efforts have been made to upgrade the educational level of Louisiana adults and some progress has resulted. However, these programs have been intermittent, limited in scope, and inadequately financed.
4. Many functionally illiterate adults have failed to participate in the Adult Education Program.
5. Poor school attendance and a high drop-out rate have contributed to low educational standards in Louisiana.

6. There is reason to question the qualification of many teachers engaged in adult education and to re-examine the weekly schedule of adult classes, the materials used, and the methods utilized in teaching.
7. A general public apathy seems to prevail regarding the low adult educational level in Louisiana. Political, civic, business and industrial leaders have not contributed their full energies to the support of Public School Adult Academic Education in this state.



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## APPENDIX

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
FEBRUARY 4, 1929

(COPY)

RULES GOVERNING SCHOOLS  
FOR ADULTS IN LOUISIANA

1. Size of Groups. The minimum number of students in a group must be not less than ten. When the number exceeds forty, the superintendent should consider the advisability of dividing the students into two groups and of employing two teachers.
2. When Schools May Be Organized. The schools may be organized at such times as the superintendent finds most convenient. Those who find it advisable to start the work immediately will organize schools as soon as they can conveniently do so; those who find that the work can be done best in the summer months will have schools organized at that time; others who find it advisable will organize the schools for work during the fall months. A single parish may have schools organized at all of the times mentioned.
3. Salaries. The salaries paid teachers should be as follows:
  - a. White teachers should be paid \$3.00 per lesson. The maximum salary paid any white teacher who is employed to teach full time with several groups should not exceed \$100.00 monthly.
  - b. Negro teachers should be paid \$1.50 per lesson. The maximum salary paid to negro teachers who are employed to teach full time with several groups should not exceed \$60.00 per

month. (It is probable that full-time teachers can be used to advantage during the summer months when the other schools are closed.)

4. The Daily Program. The length of the daily program should not be less than one hour of actual work. It is recommended that the program include one hour and thirty minutes of actual work. Such a period should be divided approximately as follows:

Reading	-----	45 minutes
Writing	-----	25 minutes
Arithmetic	-----	20 minutes

5. Textbook. The Country Life Readers, First Book, published by the B. F. Johnson Publishing Company will be used in the hands of the students. A copy of the textbook will be given to each student who enrolls in the school and agrees to do the work. An appropriate sticker to be attached to the inside cover of the book will be furnished by the State Department of Education.
6. Diplomas. An appropriate diploma will be given to each student who completes the twenty-four lessons and learns to read and write. This diploma will contain the signatures of the Governor, the President of the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, the President of the Parish School Board, the Parish Superintendent of Schools, and the teacher under whom the student learns to read and write.
7. Closing Exercises. At the completion of the twenty-four lessons,

appropriate closing exercises may be provided. These exercises may be for an individual group or there may be joint exercises for several groups when it is convenient to have the groups meet.

8. Ordering Textbooks. The parish superintendent will estimate the approximate number of textbooks needed for immediate use. The order should be sent to the State Department of Education. The order will be approved and forwarded to the publishers who will forward the books direct to the superintendent. The superintendent will check the books with his original order. The bill will then be paid by the State Board of Education.
9. Reports to the State Superintendent. A report should be made to the State Superintendent at the end of the month. This report will include the names of teachers employed, the places where groups are organized, the meetings held, and the salaries of the teachers. When this report is received a single check covering all salaries for the month will be forwarded to the parish superintendent.

At the close of the school a report giving the lists of students enrolled and graduated from the adult schools should be forwarded to the State Superintendent.

10. Assistance from the State Department of Education. Mr. M. S. Robertson of the State Department of Education will be available for assistance in connection with the adult schools. He will visit the different parishes from time to time and report on the progress of the work. Superintendents should feel free to

call on him for any assistance within his power in connection with the adult schools.

T. H. Harris

State Superintendent

( COPY )

( COPY )

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OF LOUISIANA

---

September, 1931

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ORGANIZATION OF CLASSES FOR ILLITERATE ADULTS  
IN LOUISIANA  
and

DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

---

Prepared by  
M. S. ROBERTSON

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Issued by  
T. H. HARRIS  
State Superintendent of Public Education

## GENERAL INFORMATION

(COPY)

A limited number of classes for illiterate adults will be organized in the State during the current school year. In order that the work may be more effective, much care and attention will be given to the matter of determining where classes are to be taught. The following suggestions and regulations relating to the organization of such classes are given for the information of the superintendents and teachers.

## I. When classes may be organized.

1. No classes may be organized with fewer than ten students.
2. Teachers are urged to organize classes of younger adults, as these persons will probably profit from the instruction more than older people. Persons under eighteen years of age should not be enrolled in these classes as they are expected to attend classes in the regular public schools.

## II. Teacher's remuneration

1. Teachers will be paid at the rate of \$1.50 per lesson for teaching classes of from ten to fifteen students of average daily attendance.
2. Teachers will be paid at the rate of \$2.00 per lesson for teaching classes of sixteen or more pupils of average daily attendance.



3. Teachers of colored classes will be paid \$1.00 per lesson for classes of sixteen or more.

III. Who may teach.

1. The parish superintendent will select the teachers.
2. Teachers of adult classes should hold valid teacher's certificates.

IV. Duration of classes.

1. Classes will open at such times as may be set by the parish superintendent.
2. The classes may be continued for a period of time which is found to be most profitable for the group in question. In general the teacher will be expected to continue to teach the class until the members have at least completed all the material found in the primer supplied and a minimum amount of writing.

V. Textbooks for use in classes.

1. Reader: Real Life Readers, At the Farm.
2. Penmanship: Progressive Course in Handwriting, 2nd book.
3. Spelling: Words listed for study.

VI. Number of classes that may be organized.

1. Before any class may be opened, it must be approved by the State Department of Education.
2. Only a limited number of classes may be operated in any parish.

3. Parish superintendents are urged to operate classes for persons who are deeply interested in the work. If much effort is required to enroll people, it is quite probable that they will not profit so much as will those who are eager for the instruction.

VII. How to organize a class.

1. Get a list of the persons who will be members of the class. The superintendent will supply Form Number I for this purpose.
2. Decide when and where the class will meet.
3. Present the list to the superintendent.
4. The superintendent will present the list of pupils and the proposed place and time of meeting to the State Department of Education.
5. When the authorization to begin work is received, open the classes according to the proposed schedule and continue the work.

VIII. Reporting work done.

1. At the end of each four weeks report to the superintendent facts about the class as called for on Form Number II.
2. The parish superintendent will report monthly all classes for the parish to the State Department of Education on Form Number III.

3. Checks will be sent to the parish superintendent who will send the individual checks to the teachers.
4. The work will continue until teachers are notified to discontinue the classes.

IX. Class sessions.

1. It is recommended that classes meet either two or three times each week.
2. It is recommended that the class period be one and one-half hours. In no event must the class period of actual work be less than one hour.
3. Classes may meet in the day time or at night. In this connection it is necessary that the parish superintendent be correctly informed of the days and hours of meeting.

X. Class Visitation.

1. The parish superintendent will be expected to visit all classes as often as he can conveniently do so.
2. Some member of the State Department of Education will visit each class during the session.

DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

(Copy)

## Distribution of Time

Adult classes should have three lessons a week. Each class period should cover one hour and thirty minutes distributed as follows:

Reading -----	45 minutes
Writing -----	30 minutes
Spelling -----	15 minutes
Total -----	90 minutes

## WHAT TO TEACH

## Reading

1. Textbook: Real Life Reader, At the Farm
2. Method of procedure: Begin with the first lesson in the book and proceed with the lessons in an orderly manner until the entire book is completed. Make use of the blackboard for work, phrase, and sentence drills. The student should develop the ability to read all lessons. The word list on pages 118, 119, and 120 shows the new words introduced on each page of the textbook. The new words in each lesson should be used for daily drills and reviews until the students know the words and recognize them readily on printed pages.

## Spelling

1. Textbook: No textbook is provided in spelling. In place of a textbook, a list of words is provided. The spelling should include the words on this list and certain other words that vary

for different individuals and for different communities. The teacher, guided by suggestions below, will provide the individual and community word lists.

2. Community word list: The community word list for all adults should include the following:
  - a. Name of the State.
  - b. The name of the parish.
  - c. The name of the city or town.
  - d. The name of the principal business street in the town.
  - e. The names of nearby towns.
  - f. The name of the school.
  - g. The name of the teacher.
  - h. The names of local points frequently referred to.
- 3.. The individual list of words should include:
  - a. The student's name.
  - b. The name of the street on which the student lives (if in town).
  - c. The names of close relatives of the student.
  - d. The names of persons with whom the student does business frequently.
  - e. The names of persons with whom the student wishes to correspond.
  - f. The names of critics, states, and countries in which persons with whom the student wishes to correspond live.

- g. The name of the church to which the student belongs.
  - h. The name and address of the student's employer.
  - i. Words relating to the student's occupation.
4. Method of procedure: Start with the individual words and teach them in connection with writing. As the student learns the letters of the alphabet, proceed to introduce the words in the community list. After several lessons the words in the list included here may be taught. If five words are taught each day a large vocabulary will soon be developed. Provide frequent drills on all words.

#### Writing

1. Textbook: Each student will be supplied with a copy of "Progressive Course in Handwriting, 2nd Book." This book should be used for general practice. It supplies correct letter forms. On page 32, all capital and small letters are found. On page 29, all digits from 0 to 9 are found. The student should be taught to refer to those pages when he needs assistance in getting the exact form of any letter.
2. Other materials: In addition to the writing exercises in the book mentioned above, the student should be also taught to write certain things. The following are some of the things a student should learn to write early in his school work:
  - a. The student's name.

- b. The student's post office address, including street or rural free delivery.
- c. Addressing an envelope.
- d. Date line of a letter.
- e. Salutation of a letter.
- f. Complimentary close of a letter, "Sincerely yours," or "Yours truly."
- g. A complete friendly letter.
- h. A complete business letter.
- i. All the letters of the alphabet.
- j. Sentences taken from the reader.

#### Arithmetic

Very little attention should be given to instruction in arithmetic. In connection with other work, the students should be taught to count to one hundred, to read the days of the month from a calendar, to read and write numbers found on the pages of the reader, and to read and write numbers representing small sums of money.

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
DIVISION OF EMERGENCY EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BATON ROUGE  
SEPTEMBER 1, 1934

(COPY)

EMERGENCY EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR LOUISIANA

I. Phases of work covered.

A. Literacy classes.

B. Vocational classes. A few classes may be organized where sufficient interest is present and where a competent teacher can be found. If these are organized, they will be operated in cooperation with Mr. S. M. Jackson, State Director of Agricultural Education, or Miss Clyde Mobley, State Supervisor of Home Economics.

C. Vocational rehabilitation classes. Not more than two or three classes will be possible. If these are organized, they will be operated in cooperation with Mr. E. G. Ladtke, State Director of Federal Vocational Rehabilitation.

D. General Adult education. These classes will include:  
a. Workers' Education, b. Parent Education, c. Avocational Training, hobbies and handicraft classes, d. General Academic Education, e. General Informal Education, f. Cultural Education.



- E. Nursery schools. Only a few classes of Nursery schools will be organized. These will be located in communities where special supervisory direction can be had without expense, as: Lafayette, Natchitoches, Baton Rouge, or Scotlandville. Miss Clyde Mobley, State Supervisor of Home Economics, will be used as special supervisor in connection with these classes.

## II. Administrative set-up.

### A. State.

1. The State Director of Emergency Education will be in general charge of the administrative program. All proposed parish programs will be submitted to the State Department of Education where they will be approved by the State Director of Emergency Education and the State Superintendent of Public Schools. They will then be forwarded to the State Director of Relief for final approval.
2. A supervisory staff will be maintained to work under the direction of the State Director of Emergency Education. It will be the duty of the supervisors to supervise instruction, to aid parish officials in planning and organizing the Adult Education Program, and to render any services which may be designated by the State Director of Emergency Education in connection with the promotion and operation of classes

for adults.

B. Parish.

1. The Parish Superintendent of Schools, the Parish Director of Relief, and the Educational Supervisor will be jointly responsible for the initiation and operation of the parish program. The Superintendent, in cooperation with the other persons mentioned, will determine the communities in which different types of classes may be operated, and will be responsible for the general operation of the program within the parish. In the event that the Superintendent fails to initiate a program, the other persons are authorized to do so. The Superintendent and the Parish Director of Relief will select teachers from those who are eligible for relief. In the event no person on the relief rolls is eligible for a specific job, an attempt will be made to find a teacher who can do the work, and who is eligible for work on a relief project. The eligibility for employment on a relief project will always be determined by the Parish Director of Relief in accordance with directions supplied by the State Director of Relief. In the event that the Superintendent and the Relief Director fail to agree on the personnel of teachers within the parish, the question will be referred to the State

Director of Emergency Education for final selection.

2. The program set up by the persons enumerated under Number I will be submitted to the State Director of Emergency Education for his approval and for transmittal to the State Director of Relief.

III. Where classes may be taught.

- A. Designated classrooms in public school buildings.
- B. Community halls and other places approved by the Parish Superintendent and the State Director of Emergency Education.
- C. Rooms in private homes which have been approved by the Parish Superintendent and the State Director of Emergency Education.

IV. Teachers.

- A. Any teacher who is qualified to teach in the public schools may be employed in the Adult Schools.
- B. Occasionally well-educated persons who do not hold certificates to teach in the regular public schools may be permitted to teach in the Adult Schools because of their particular fitness to do a certain job.

V. Salary of teachers.

- A. Literacy classes. Teachers of literacy classes will be paid at the rate of fifty cents (50¢) per hour for a maximum of twenty-four hours per week.

- B. Other classes. Teachers of all other classes will be paid at the rate of sixty cents (60¢) per hour for a maximum of twenty-four hours per week.
- C. Principal teacher. A superintendent may recommend one principal teacher for each ten teachers employed. When the number of teachers reaches eighteen, a second principal teacher may be employed. The principal teacher will be paid at the rate of seventy-five cents (75¢) per hour for a maximum of twenty-four hours per week. In addition to this, the principal teacher will be paid \$5.00 per week to apply on traveling expenses incurred in the performance of supervisory and other duties assigned.

VI. Explanation of working time.

- A. For every two hours of actual classroom teaching, the teacher may be allowed one hour to be devoted to class promotion and one hour for preparation. In every instance, the actual time when the work is to be done must be indicated on a form supplied by the State Director of Emergency Education.
- B. A teacher who is teaching a large class may devote part of her time to instruction of smaller groups or individuals.

VII. When classes may begin.

The Superintendent of Schools and the Relief Director will submit an educational project for the parish calling for the maximum number of teachers that will probably be employed. After this project is approved, the Superintendent, the Director of Relief, and the Emergency Education Supervisor will proceed to establish classes where ever and whenever needed within the limits of this project and subject to the approval of the State Director of Emergency Education.

VIII. Size of classes.

Classes may vary in size. On the average, a teacher will be expected to give instruction to about twenty persons. No teacher should be permitted to begin work until he has secured at least ten students to attend his classes.

IX. Materials and supplies.

In making application for a class, the Superintendent will itemize the cost of operating the school including teacher's salary, materials, supplies, and other necessary items.

X. Reports.

Report forms will be supplied to district supervisors, superintendents, and teachers. These reports will be required at regular times to be designated by the State Director of Emergency Education.

M. S. Robertson  
State Director of  
Emergency Education.

PROCEDURES FOR THE ISSUANCE OF HIGH  
SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY DIPLOMAS ARE EXPLAINED  
STEP-BY-STEP FROM THE TIME THE ADULT  
STUDENT QUALIFIES TO BE RECOMMENDED TO  
TAKE THE G.E.D. TESTS TO THE TIME HE RECEIVES  
HIS DIPLOMA UNDER ACT 252 OF 1950

(Copy)

1. When the adult student has met and/or surpassed the minimum requirements of age of 19 years, 90 hours of attendance after reaching the 9th grade level, a 13.0 grade level achievement as determined by the last standardized achievement test, and the teacher as well as the student feels he is ready to take the G.E.D. Tests, the teacher then reports this information to the parish or city office of Adult Education. To this report a copy of form LAE-9, "Report of Last California Achievement Test," must be attached.
2. The parish or city superintendent completes 4 copies of form LAE-11, "Recommendation for Administration of Tests of General Educational Development," properly signed, to which one copy of form LAE-9 must be attached, and mails these to the State Director of High Schools, State Department of Education, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
3. If the minimum age of 19 years, 90 hours of attendance and the 13.0 grade level are not reached, the form LAE-11 will not be approved, and it will be returned to the Superintendent.

4. After the Recommendation is approved by the State Director of High Schools, an approved copy of the form LAE-11 will be mailed to each of the following:
  - (a) The Parish or City School Superintendent.
  - (b) The Testing Agent.
  - (c) The State Director of Adult Education.
5. Then the State Director of Adult Education will notify the adult student as to whom to contact and what arrangements are to be made to take the G.E.D. Tests. A copy of this notice will be mailed to the parish or city supervisor of Adult Education.

Every possible effort must be exerted by the teacher and supervisor of Adult Education to guide and encourage the student to take the G.E.D. Tests. It is discouraging to develop an individual to this point and, because of lack of proper guidance, the student does not take the G.E.D. Tests.
6. Next, the student takes the G.E.D. Tests.
7. After the student completes the tests, the testing agent sends 4 copies of the official results of the tests to the State Director of High Schools.
8. The State Director of High Schools sends a copy of the official results of the tests to each of the following:
  - (a) The principal of the school from which the high school equivalency diploma is to be issued.
  - (b) The Testing Agent.

(c) The State Director of Adult Education.

The original copy will be retained in the office of the State Director of High Schools.

9. Two weeks after Step No. 8 has been completed the State Director of Adult Education writes a letter to the student informing him of his results on the G.E.D. Tests. The next step for him to follow if he passes the G.E.D. Test is to contact the principal of the school and ask him to fill out form IS-3, pink and white copies, and to mail the same to the State Director of High Schools. A copy of the State Director of Adult Education's letter to the student will be mailed to the Supervisor of Adult Education of the parish or city.
10. The principal of the school referred to in Step No. 8 (a) above is to send to the State Director of High Schools the pink and white copies of form IS-3, a certification of the student's high school credits, and/or the necessary statement relative to the adult's attendance in the Adult Education classes.
11. After the State Director of High Schools receives the pink and white transcripts, form IS-3, the High School Equivalency Diploma is issued and mailed to the principal of the school.
12. The principal in turn signs the diploma and submits it to the Superintendent for his signature and that of the President of the parish or city school board.
13. The principal then forwards the High School Equivalency Diploma to the student.



STATE OF LOUISIANA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

(Revised 1960)

Re: Adult Academic  
Education

PLAN NO. I

(COPY)

The purpose of this plan is to use funds made available by Act 252 to reduce illiteracy in the State of Louisiana. Under this plan a parish will organize a class of not more than twenty adult illiterates and procure a qualified teacher to carry on instruction in the basic subjects of reading, writing, and number work. The class will meet and instruction may be offered on the schedule explained in the foregoing Plan of Operation, Part IV. The Parish will be reimbursed at the rate of \$3.75 per teacher hour for instruction, or a total of \$495.00 for this course in fundamental primary individual education.

The adult student is to receive individualized instruction on an accelerated basis, allowing said individual to progress in accordance with his ability.

PLAN NO. II

(COPY)

The purpose of this plan is to provide upper elementary educational experiences to those adults who are interested in advancing their level of educational attainment. Under this plan a parish will organize a class of not more than twenty adult students and procure a qualified elementary teacher to carry on instruction in the basic elementary subjects of reading, writing, spelling, mathematics, and social studies.

The class will meet and instruction may be offered on the schedule explained in the foregoing Plan of Operation, Part IV. The parish will be reimbursed at the rate of \$3.75 per teacher hour of instruction, or a total of \$495.00 for this course in fundamental elementary education.

The adult student is to receive individualized instruction on an accelerated basis, allowing said individual to progress in accordance with his ability.

PLAN NO. III

(COPY)

The purpose of this plan is to use funds available by Act 252 to offer adult students training in regular secondary subject-matter areas or in such vocational subjects as are carried on in regular approved high schools. Under this plan a parish will organize a class of not more than twenty adult students and procure a qualified high school teacher to carry on instruction in the subjects offered.

The class will meet and instruction may be offered on the schedule explained in the foregoing Plan of Operation, Part IV. The parish will be reimbursed at the rate of \$3.75 per teacher hour for instruction or a total of \$495.00 for this course in secondary education.

The adult student is to receive individualized instruction on an accelerated basis, allowing for said individual to progress in accordance with his ability.

PLAN NO. IV

(COPY)

The purpose of this plan is to use funds made available by Act 252 for the purpose of carrying on research and experiments in Adult Education in connection with the year-round school program being developed in certain schools under the sponsorship of the State Department of Education. Under this plan a special program of Adult Education, including the areas covered in Plans I, II, and III, and such other special areas as may be deemed worthy of study, shall be organized in connection with the experimental school program.

The Parish in which this experimental school is located shall be reimbursed at the rate of \$3.75 per teacher hour for instruction carried on in connection with this program. The State Department of Education shall set a limit as to the amount of funds which may be expended in any one experimental school.

Under this plan it shall be the duty of the parish superintendent and principal of the experimental school to cooperate with the State Department of Education in setting up this experimental program. The supervisor in charge shall make all required reports to the State Department of Education.

The Adult student is to receive individualized instruction on an accelerated basis, allowing said individual to progress in accordance with his ability.

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO APPLY IN THE  
ORGANIZATION OF PLANS I, II, III, AND IV

(COPY)

1. No plan shall be put in operation until it has been officially approved by the State Department of Education.
2. Careful records shall be kept concerning the operation of the various educational programs developed by funds to be used in expanding and improving Adult Education in Louisiana.
3. It shall be the responsibility of the parish superintendent of schools to select the teachers who shall recruit the students who participate in this program of Adult Education.
4. The small amount of money available to support this program makes it necessary to limit each parish in Adult Education for which reimbursement can be claimed. In the event that some parishes fail to take advantage of this program, funds shall be reallocated, thus permitting interested parishes to organize additional classes.

Memo. No. 9  
Sept., 1961

(COPY)

AN EXPLANATION OF THE VARIOUS PHASES  
STEP-BY-STEP of the Adult Academic Education  
Program for the use of Teachers Engaged in this Program

I. The Teacher Must -

- A. Possess a valid regular Louisiana teacher's Certificate.
- B. Possess, primarily, a dedicated desire to help educate the under-educated, letting the financial remuneration be secondary.
- C. Possess the ability to work with adults.
- D. Be creative and possess initiative.
- E. Read the Handbook (revised in 1960), the Plan of Operation, and all subsequent memorandums dealing with the functions of Adult Education.
- F. Discuss his plan and program with the principal of the school where the class will be conducted.

II. Organizing a Class.

- A. Inform the adult population 19 years of age and over of the school area about the purposes of the Adult Education program and its opportunities in order to cause them to attend the organizational or enrollment meeting. Many ways should be employed to insure a large attendance. Some of these ways are: by making door to door calls;

announcements by newspapers, radio and TV, church pastors, PTA organizations, store managers, industry personnel managers, and notices sent by school children, etc.

- B. More detailed information is given at this meeting to include the need of more education, the monetary values, as well as the social and cultural benefits resulting from achieving more education. An explanation of how the classes are conducted and especially that no one can fail any of the achievement tests administered, and that the adult students are taught individually, which makes it possible for any one to progress as fast as he is capable of learning, that the class periods are scheduled to meet the desire of the majority of the class members, and many other items printed in the handbook.
- C. Use form LAE-1 to enroll the adults; a minimum of 15, and a maximum of not more than 20 are scheduled to be in attendance during any one class period. Those in excess of the maximum should be listed on a waiting list with their addresses and phone numbers in order to notify them when there is an opening for enrollment which may have resulted from a drop-out. If the number on the waiting list is large enough to organize a second class, notify the school principal and parish supervisor.

- D. With the enrollees, decide; which nights to meet for class work, the length of the class meetings, and the time that the class period will begin and end. From this you will announce the next class meeting date.
- E. Since the students are required to pay for the workbooks and test forms and supplies, it is suggested that \$5.00 be deposited by each student at the next meeting. The cost of these materials would be deducted from the \$5.00 deposited as the materials are issued to the student. If any amount is left over at the end of the school year, it would be refunded to the adult student. A record to be kept of these transactions for each student.

### III. Placement Testing

- A. From the enrollment sheet, LAE-1, the number of achievement tests needed for each group of grade levels is determined; that is; for grades (1-2-3-14), (4-5-6), 7-8-9), (9-14), inclusive. Order the number of standardized achievement tests needed for each group so that they will be in your possession when the class members meet to take the first test.
- B. At least two class meetings will be needed to administer the achievement tests for Reading, Mathematics, Language and Spelling.
- C. The Mathematics section of the test should be given first and completed on that night and scored immediately. If



time permits, a part or all of another section of the achievement test may be administered during this class meeting.

- D. The test results are tabulated on the last sheet (diagnostic profile) and the number of workbooks needed for each grade level of Mathematics is determined. As soon as the Mathematics test is administered and scored, the workbooks (as per the list of workbooks available) are ordered at once by phone, wire or mail to insure delivery to you in time for the first class period after the last achievement test.
- E. The remainder of the tests for Reading, Language and/or Spelling are to be administered during the next (second) class meeting. The test results are used as was done for Mathematics, and the workbooks for these subjects are ordered immediately for the next class meeting.

#### IV. Achievement Testings.

- A. Every adult student enrolling for the first time in the program must be tested at least twice during the fiscal year; - once at time of enrollment a placement test is given, as explained in Item III above; the other at the end of the school year or when the class is closed.
- B. One of more achievement tests may be necessary between the two tests referred to above.

C. The in-between tests may be for one or more of the following reasons:

1. To determine as nearly as possible the date when a student achieves the 9.0 grade level. Since some students may score a fraction below 9.0 on the placement test, example; a student scoring 8.7 indicates it will be a short time until the first in-between test must be administered.
2. When a student is to drop out of the class because of possibly moving away before the end of the school year, or for any other reason, his progress should be determined by an achievement test before this departure.
3. To determine, at any time during the year, when the student has reached the 13.0 grade level, before being recommended for the G.E.D. Tests, if he has attained a minimum of 90 hours of attendance after reaching 9.0 grade level.

D. A student re-enrolling in the program for whom there is a record of an achievement test administered at the end of the previous school session, does not necessarily need to be tested at the beginning of the present school year but must be tested at the end of the year. This student may also need to be given an in-between test.

E. All of the results of all tests must be recorded on each individual student's permanent record, form LAE-7.

V. Teaching.

- A. Since the grade level workbooks needed for each of the subject-matter areas vary for an individual as well as for different students, the adults will have to be taught individually most of the time. The teachers must move around among the students and detect the needed help by the individuals and give them the specific needed instruction, then move on to the other students one by one to give individualized instructions. While working with each individual student guidance and counseling is given as needed.
- B. An adequate supply of reference materials must be available to the students during the class periods. Some of these reference materials are: maps (parish, state, U.S. and world); dictionaries; science books; social studies books; encyclopedias; a copy of each of the textbooks used in the regular day public school system, and others fitting the needs.
- C. The teachers should periodically inform the principal of the progress and attendance and council with him on matters of the program. The parish legislators should be invited to visit your class while it is in session in order that they can get to feel the effects of the conscientious application on the part of the students and see the accomplishments. After all, the legislature

provides the funds for this program. Let's give them the opportunity to feel proud of being a part of this program.

#### VI. Records.

- A. An individual cumulative record must be kept for each student on form LAE-7, and filed in an individual folder for each student. The information recorded thereon is: name, address, hours of attendance, test results, and achievements, etc.

When a student who had previously attended a regular school class or an adult class at another school and who is in the high school grade level, enrolls in the class, he should be advised to request from the principal of his previous school to send a transcript of his school credits to the principal of your school. The principal of your school should be alerted to this forthcoming transcript.

- B. Other records to be kept in the student's individual folder are:
1. The application for admittance, form LAE-1.
  2. The diagnostic profile of each test administered.
  3. Results on form LAE-9 of achievement tests when recommended for G.E.D. Tests.
  4. Other pertinent documents.

VII. Certificates of Achievement.

- A. Official State Department of Education Certificate of Achievement should be awarded at the end of the school year to at least those who complete the 5th grade, and to those who complete the 8th grade.

Completion of the 5th grade signifies that the student is now literate. One who completes the 8th grade signifies that he has reached the high school level.

- B. Such a certificate may also be awarded to those students who advance at least one grade during the school year.

VIII. General Educational Development (G.E.D.) Tests.

- A. When an adult student has achieved a score of 13.0 grade, or more, as determined by an achievement test, and he has attained a minimum of 90 clock hours after reaching the high school level, 9th grade, he may be recommended to take the G.E.D. Tests. (See Memorandum No. 8 for 1961-62).

- B. Successfully passing the G.E.D. Tests will entitle the student to receive a Certificate of High School Equivalency. (See Memorandum No. 8 for 1961-62).

- C. The teacher should keep check on the students recommended to take the G.E.D. Tests to make sure that they do take the tests. Too many students have been prepared to the point of being ready for the G.E.D. Tests but, they do not take advantage of this important opportunity

because of lack of proper guidance.

IX. Filing.

The teacher of adults should maintain an up-to-date file for the program of his class to include:

- A. A Handbook.
- B. State Plan of Operation.
- C. Daily Attendance, form LAE-2.
- D. Enrollment Report, form LAE-5.
- E. Circular Letters and Memorandums.
- F. Statistics.
- G. Teaching Materials List and Available Source.
- H. Evaluation Report, form LAE-10.
- I. Folders for Each Student, containing:
  - 1. Form LAE-1, application for Admittance.
  - 2. Form LAE-7, Individual Cumulative Permanent Record.
  - 3. Diagnostic Profiles of Achievement Tests.
  - 4. Form LAE-9 for G.E.D. Tests.
  - 5. Other Pertinent Information of the Individual.
- J. Other.

Memorandum No. 12  
September 1962

(Copy)

SUPPLEMENTAL DETAILS USED  
IN THE  
ADULT ACADEMIC PROGRAM

I. Recording grade levels.

- A. An enrollee with no formal schooling, who is unable to take a written test, will be recorded at "0" grade level on LAE-7 for the first recording.
- B. Grade levels should be recorded on LAE-5, LAE-7, etc., except for those in section (A) above.

II. Equivalency Diploma.

- A. All persons successfully completing the minimum requirements of the Adult Academic Education Program and making a passing score on the Tests of General Educational Development (G.E.D.) will from now on be issued a "High School Equivalency Diploma" in lieu of an Equivalency Certificate.

III. Age for enrollment.

- A. Attention is called to Bulletin No. 741, the Handbook for School Administrators, Revised 1959, Item I, Section C, page 166, where it states, "In no instance may non-veterans under the age of 19 be enrolled in adult education classes when any parish or city school board is receiving funds on a per-educable basis for those individuals."

There is no authority given to  
deviate from this regulation.

IV. LAE-10 (Annual Evaluation Report.)

- A. The students who enroll at the "0" grade level, as outlined in Item I, Section A of this memorandum, and have been tested one time later during the year, would be classified as having two tests recorded on LAE-7. These students would also be recorded on line 2 of LAE-10.
- B. All students, with the exception of those referred to in Item I, Section A of this memorandum, should be tested immediately upon enrolling in the classes and at the close of the class, as outlined on page 3, Item IV of Memorandum No. 9, September 1961.
- C. Every effort, through counseling and guidance, should be exerted to insure the administering of an achievement test before it is necessary for a student to discontinue his education in your class. He may need to show his achievement in your class for employment or advancement in his job. This can be done by issuing an achievement certificate. A supply of these may be obtained from this office.

If a student is transferred to another class,  
then a copy of LAE-7 is used as his official transcript.



STATE OF LOUISIANA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
March 4, 1963

(COPY)

RE: Adult Academic  
Education

STATE RESULTS OF THE PROGRAM

The economic welfare and social standing of an individual, a family, a community, a parish, a state, or nation is in direct proportion to the educational levels of its population. This measure is more pronounced today than it was 30 years ago.

This past year 13,436 adults enrolled in the program over the state in 50 parishes. This means that 537 classrooms were added to the public school system without laying a single brick or buying a single desk or chair. The already established school facilities are used at night. That makes sense. Since increased education to adults makes dollars - - the program of adult education makes "dollars and sense."

In addition to the 1,450 who completed their high school education in this program last year, nearly 12,000 others upgraded themselves an average of almost two grades per person - - 1.9 to be exact - - at an astonishing low investment of \$13.71 per grade elevated. They are allowed to progress as fast as they can learn.

PARISH AND LOCAL BENEFITS

According to the 1960 U. S. census, a person with less than a high

school education, on an average, has an increased earning capacity of \$1.02 per day per academic grade elevated.

Earlier I said that \_\_\_\_\_ adults in this parish do not have a high school education. Did you know that half of these adults are less than 45 years of age? Therefore, \_\_\_\_\_ have an average of 33 years of productive service ahead of them before reaching retiring age. A recent survey in Louisiana shows that by increasing the education of these \_\_\_\_\_ adults through high school would mean, on an average, an increased income of \$708.00 per year per person. Gentlemen, do you know what that would mean parish wide? \_\_\_\_\_ x \$708.00 = \_\_\_\_\_ million dollars (\_\_\_\_\_) increased income per year. This will be repeated year after year for 33 years because the average enrollee is 32 years of age.

Each of you will get your share of the additional money these adults have to spend. This may be the beginning of their use of the banking facilities: the building and loans business is increased because the survey further shows that 19.2% purchased homes since they graduated. Other economic and social improvements are:

- (1) 18.6% - Obtained employment.
- (2) 22.1% - Earned promotions in employment.
- (3) 15.8% - Enrolled in college.
- (4) 13.6% - Enrolled in vocational schools.
- (5) 21.8% - Exercised citizenship responsibilities.
- (6) 17.2% - Added telephones.
- (7) 4.1% - Added electricity.

- (8) 4.7% - Added natural or butane gas.
- (9) 6.0% - Added running water.
- (10) 16.4% - Added air conditioning.
- (11) 7.3% - Added sanitary bathroom facilities.
- (12) 13.6% - Purchased newspapers.
- (13) 7.8% - Purchased radios.
- (14) 14.5% - Purchased TV sets.
- (15) 27.8% - Purchased magazines.

Of course, lawyers, doctors, churches and others would get their share as well as the contractors, telephone company, utility companies, appliance businesses, plumbers, newspapers, etc.

The increased income of adults begins at once: therefore, the increased spending also occurs immediately.

#### STATE CASH BENEFITS

The adult education program in Louisiana conducted last year will bring to the state treasury during the next 33 years \$10.78 profit for every dollar invested in the program. This is 32% profit per year or 3 and 3/4 million dollars from the investment of only \$350,000.00 for 33 years. Remember -- this is an investment in human brains that can grow and develop as compared to consumable materials -- buildings, implements, automobiles, etc., all of which depreciate and are all short lived. Investment in education is a permanent one. This profit to the state treasury is based upon the 2% sales tax which is applicable to the increased earnings because of more education whether one buys a

loaf of bread or a Cadillac.

There are other intangible benefits of education too numerous to list here.

The jobs requiring no education are diminishing: whereas, the jobs requiring more education are on the increase. This is true on the farm as well as in business and industry.

You as employers should know that, although on a limited basis, educational opportunities are available in Louisiana for adults from the 1st through the 12th grades and they can enroll at any time because they are taught individually and cannot get ahead or behind the class work.

Through the Adult Education Program we can influence the teenagers to remain in school thereby preventing the serious problem of dropouts from the regular day schools.

It is predicted that on an average a teenager dropping out of school now will be on welfare at the age of 35. It is cheaper to educate our people than it is to carry them as public dependents.

Your influence as tax payers is needed to obtain the adequate funds for this indispensable Adult Education Program, one that has proven its effects on Louisiana's economic and social standings during the past decade.

## VITA

The writer was born in New Orleans on April 12, 1918. He attended the P. A. Capdau Elementary School and Warren Easton High School, from which he graduated in 1938. He graduated from Northwestern State College in January, 1942, and entered the Army Air Force the following month. He spent over four years on active duty during World War II serving as both an enlisted man and officer. Upon release from the Air Force in April, 1946, he enrolled for the summer term at Louisiana State University. In the fall of 1946 he accepted a teaching position in Natchitoches Parish. Through summer school work the Master of Arts Degree was gained in 1949.

From 1948 to 1950 he served as principal of the Bellwood Junior High School. Since 1950 he has served as principal and teacher in the schools of Calcasieu Parish. During this time he also worked as Itinerant Teacher with the Veterans' Educational Program and taught classes in Adult Education.

## EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Edward D. Schumacher

Major Field: Education

Title of Thesis: The Development of Public School Adult Academic Education  
in Louisiana

Approved:

Donald E. Shipp  
Major Professor and Chairman

Max Goodrich  
Dean of the Graduate School

### EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

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Date of Examination:

August 3, 1964